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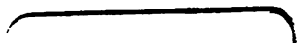
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ARMOUR

THE ARMOURY OF THE ARMY



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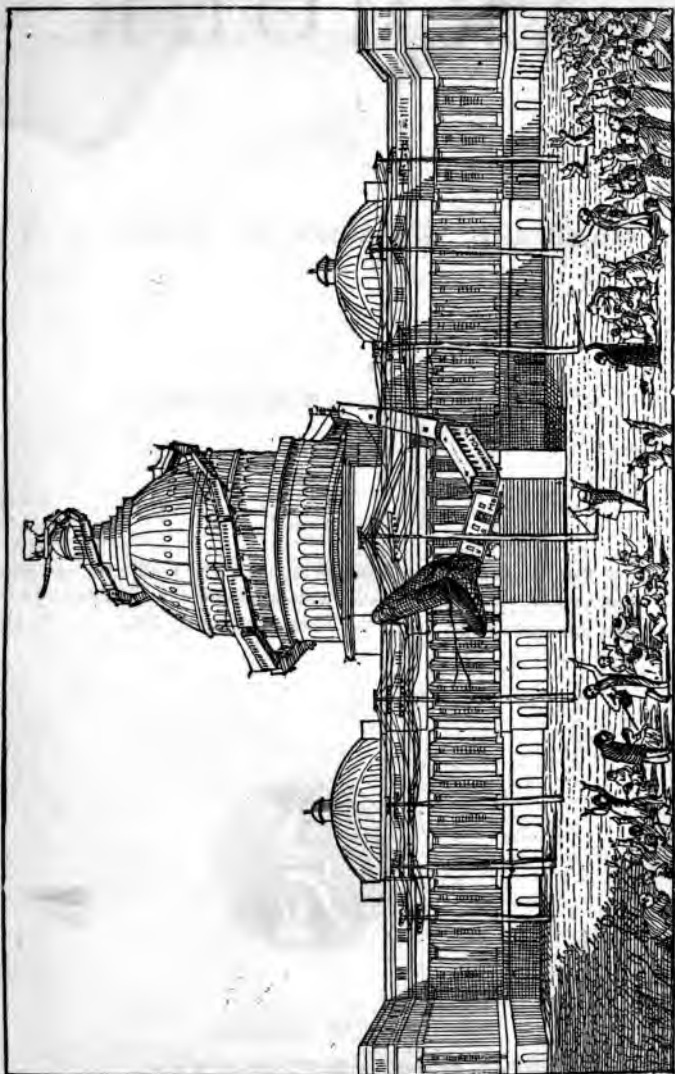




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ARMOUR;

OR,

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?

BY

BY C. H. ANDERSON.

"The Surgeon and the Assassin both use the knife; the one with kindness and science, the other with wantonness and malice. The one cuts that he may cure; the other that he may kill."



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P R E F A C E .

Written from no spirit of malice, nor to gratify personal likes or dislikes, but from a sincere and natural hatred of tyranny, sham, pretension, greed, and rascality, whenever and wherever found, utterly regardless of cast, creed, or consequences.

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ARMOUR.

CHAPTER I.

THE CRICKET AND THE ANT.

NEAR the close of a beautiful day, in the autumn of 1861, two young men were standing on the brow of a lofty hill, which commanded a magnificent view of the surrounding country. Carelessly leaning on their fowling-pieces, they were evidently enjoying the wild and romantic scenery about them. The sky was deeply blue, the air full of soft, mellow sunshine. On every side were brightly-tinted woods, and softly-rolling hills, clad in all the gorgeous coloring of Tyrian dyes — crimson and gold, scarlet and brown, blending with all the intermediate shades. Far in the distance could be seen the tall spires and white cottages of the quaint, old town of Armour, nestling on the banks of a little mountain stream, which shimmered and sparkled in the bright, October sunshine like molten silver, as it lazily wound its serpentine course throughout the narrow valley, and around the bases of steep, wooded hills, until finally lost to view behind an abrupt mountain, which, more bold than his fellows, had thrust himself far out into the stream. The view, and the

soft, balmy atmosphere, so peculiar to our northern climate during this season, were well calculated to soothe the most restless mind, and to prove very conducive to pensive and dreamy meditation.

"What are you thinking about, Larry?" asked Malcolm Conyngham, apparently the elder of the two, of his companion, Lawrence Hamilton.

"I was thinking how much this scene is like the Italian Sunset we admired so much in Earle's gallery last week," replied his friend, in a low, musical voice, as he stretched himself full length upon the hillside, and supporting his head with his arms, dreamily surveyed the landscape before him.

"What picture are you speaking of? I do not remember any Italian Sunset at Earle's?"

"Don't you remember that picture of the pretty girl leaning against a rock, with a far-away, wistful look in her great, brown eyes?"

"I believe I do remember the Sunset and the girl," laughed Conyngham, as he seated himself by his friend, "but I think you are drawing on your imagination, Larry, as to the far-away, wistful look. I do not remember of seeing it, anyhow."

"I forgot the Conynghams were Scotch;" replied Hamilton, a little nettled. "I believe no one ever accused the Sandies of possessing very much imagination or poetry."

"How about Burns?"

"He was but an exception to the rule; and his countrymen never tired of abusing him in his day, for what they considered his nonsense. I believe they would think as little of him yet, if the rest of the world did not insist that he was a great man. I was reading, the other day, of the

death of an old woman, a neighbor of the poet, and who, to the last, said she never could understand 'Why people made so much futh over that luthe, druthin fella, Boorns.'"

"I think the old woman was about right," replied Conyngham. "Instead of strolling about the country, carousing and making love to, and poetizing every pretty girl he fancied, it would have been far better, in my opinion, for both Burns and his family, if he had stuck to his plow, and made a good, honest living."

"Oh that is about the way all Scotchmen viewed his career then, but at the very time, he was making Scotland famous."

"Well, if he did make Scotland famous, neither he nor his family reaped any benefit from it."

"Malcolm, there is no use in arguing with you, where any poetry is concerned. You are, without exception, the most prosaic and matter-of-fact young man I have ever met with. There is such a thing as being too much so."

"Well, I cannot help my Scotch and Dutch blood, Larry, no more than you can the mercurial temperament and hot mixture of French and Irish blood that your Hamilton family tree shows, crossed and re-crossed so often, much to the detriment of the old Hamilton family estate. As it is, I would not, under any circumstances, exchange temperaments with you."

"Don't you believe persons possessing a poetical temperament enjoy more keenly the pleasures of life, than matter-of-fact and prosaic people?"

"They might," replied Conyngham, if they were in possession, also, of an unlimited exchequer. One of the inevitable results of this temperament is a chronic state of impecuniosity. Such persons seldom make money, and as they can never save any, they are necessarily, as a gen-

eral thing, in straitened circumstances, and compelled to depend, more or less, on their more provident and practical friends to extricate them from the pecuniary embarrassments, in which their love and taste for the beautiful invariably involves them. You remember the song of the cricket and the ant. Like the former, these gay and improvident ones sing all the summer long in the bright sunshine, never thinking of the dark, cold winter before them, and pitifully beg from the ant when it overtakes them; or, in other words, their friends that have more wisely provided for the future."

"Yes, and the poor devils always get the cold-blooded ant's refusal," laughed Hamilton cynically.

"And the homily thrown in," said Conyngham, grimly.

"Well," continued Hamilton, "I am not so certain, after all, but the cricket has the best time of it. He simply condenses his pleasures, and the ant certainly never attains the same exquisite height of enjoyment."

"No, nor the same terrific depth of misery when starvation sets in," growled his friend.

"I believe," continued Hamilton, not regarding the interruption, "that the Lord intended both for some special purpose, and that each has his mission. Of course I am to infer that I am the cricket and you are the ant. But you need have no fears, Malcolm, of my calling on you when winter sets in. I would certainly get the ant's reply."

"Yes, and the homily too," good-naturedly retorted Conyngham.

"How dissimilar we are in our tastes, Malcolm. I'll venture to say, while I have been reveling in the beauties of nature all day, your mind, for you have no imagination, has been occupied in making sordid business calculations, never thinking of the beauty around you."

"I have been thinking of business matters, and my mind might have been worse employed. I am sure my thoughts have been as profitable, and certainly more innocent than your own. I know too well, Larry, what a luxurious Sybarite and voluptuary you are; and I am confident that your thoughts were not confined to admiring the beauties of nature alone. Beautiful women, my boy, have occupied your thoughts more than beautiful scenery."

"That is only admiring nature in another form."

"Yes, but not an equally innocent amusement, in the way you think of them. Am I not right in my conjecture?"

"Yes, you are. Beautiful women have been occupying my thoughts to some extent, and, to be candid, none of your St. Cecilia-faced women either, with their cold, classical faces, whose only beauty lies merely in the regularity of their clear-cut but inexpressive features,—but creatures of flesh and blood, such as the good old Dr. Wordsworth describes as,

‘Creatures not too bright nor good
For human nature’s daily food.’”

"Dr. Wordsworth never intended those lines to be quoted in the sense in which you employ them," interrupted Conyngham, while an amused smile played around his lips. He evidently enjoyed his friend's conversation, and took pleasure in listening to his vagaries. "Let me have a description of your ideal woman. Of course she must be above all things beautiful."

"Not the greatest consideration by any means, I assure you. I do not care how beautiful a woman is, if she lacks the fire of a passionate and loving heart, she can neither

affect nor attract me. Love, not too open, but modest, veiled, timid yet ardent, coying yet fearful. Ah! a woman never looks so beautiful as when glowing with the tender passion, and her eyes are luminous and liquid with the soft melting fire of —”

“Be careful now, Larry,” laughed Conyngham, “I know where you are drifting to.”

“What pleasure,” continued Hamilton, “can compare with the bliss of two intellectually luxurious natures when fully conscious of the certainty of each others love. Away with your gold and your ingots! Neither their pursuit nor their possession can give one such ecstatic pleasure, as the mingling of two such natures. Ah! what intense and exquisite pleasure they must enjoy in the full fruition of their mutual love! If I had my choice, I believe I would prefer the gay lives of Mark Anthony and Cleopatra, to the highly proper, decorous, and stupidly respectable lives of our more modern imperial pair, Albert and Victoria.”

“The deep damnation of their taking off, was not so pleasant to contemplate,” again interrupted Conyngham.

“Well, that is all true. The gay pair did not live out more than half their days, yet it is a fair question with me if such a life of gratified pleasure, say for thirty years, would not be worth more than a full sixty of virtuous and respectable stupidity.”

“The cricket and the ant again,” growled Malcolm, “but go on and let me hear you out.”

“Mark could certainly say, like that old Spanish Lothario, you remember in Lucile — you have read Lucile, have you not?”

“No, I never read Lucile.”

“Your education then, has been very sadly neglected.”

"Go on! go on! What about the Spanish Lothario?"

"Well —

'A hoary Lothario, whom, dying, the priest by his bed
Knowing full well the unprincipled life he had led,
And observing, with no small amount of surprise,
Resignation and calm in the old sinner's eyes,
Asked if he had nothing that weighed on his mind :
' Well, no,' said Lothario, ' I think not. I find,
On reviewing my life which in most things was pleasant,
I never neglected, when once it was present,
An occasion of pleasing myself ; on the whole,
I have nought to regret.' And so, smiling, his soul
Took its flight from this world.' "

" He was an old villain," ejaculated Conyngham.

" I am not so sure about that," said Hamilton. " I am very lenient in my judgment of the old fellow. If some of the immaculate people who condemn him were beset by one half the temptations that passes through the minds of persons with warm imaginations, they would not shine before the world, as men and women of great moral worth and exceptionable purity of character ; nor would the world give them credit for resisting temptations which had never presented themselves."

" Well, keep on through life, Larry, and put your ideas into practice, like your old friend the Spanish Lothario, and my word for it, you will find your apples of Sodom turn to ashes on your lips ; and just so far as you give way to the gratifying of wild and unbridled passions, utterly regardless of the consequences to yourself and to others, that day will certainly come, as to-morrow's sun will rise, when you will fully realize the fearful mistake you have made. But I know you like to make yourself out worse than you really are. My only fear is that a stranger, listening to such talk, might set you down as

an unprincipled rake, which we all at home know you are not; and, as a friend, I advise you to put a bridle on both your tongue and your imagination, on this subject particularly. Strangers may not be as charitably disposed towards you as your friends are who understand you."

"You are always reproaching me, Malcolm, for my occasional rather reprehensible license of thought and speech, but I also notice that cautious and correct persons like yourself, enjoy very much hearing, and quietly encourage candid, indiscreet, and impulsive people, with glowing imaginations, to unbosom themselves, and air their peculiar views on topics generally tabooed by the strictly Calvinistic school. However, it is an old, old story. The world condemned whilst living the two greatest poets she has ever produced, for expressing themselves too feelingly, although so attractively on this subject; and then, Oh, ye gods! with what virtuous consistency they erected splendid monuments to their memory, and placed magnificent mausoleums over their remains, and trumpeted their fame to the four quarters of the globe."

"All true, Larry; but do you desire to lead the restless and unhappy lives of these men, and die as they did. Their sad song to the last was the saddest of all songs, — 'What might have been.' You remember how poor Burns' life of pleasure, even with the greatest talents, bound him to poverty and compelled him to resort to the most humiliating shifts for a bare living, which, to a proud nature like his, must have been more bitter than death, as he struggled on,

"Mid care and pain and want and woe,
With wounds that only death could heal,
Fortunes the poor alone can know,
The proud alone can feel.'

And finally died with an execration on his lips, against a creditor who, more relentless than the rest, had pursued him even to the bed of death, and the borders of eternity. And miserable Byron, brilliant but bitter, after compelling the world to acknowledge his genius, wrecked in purse and reputation in the bloom of young manhood, an Ishmaelite in society, divorced, and dying far from home and friends, amongst strangers in a strange land! And there was the Earl of Rochester, the merry monarch's most witty, versatile, and profligate courtier, who in dying, unlike your Spanish Lothario, cried out to his father confessor, 'Oh my God, father! My life has all been a terrible mistake, a wretched mistake!' Your old friend, the Spanish Lothario, was simply an exception. That was all."

Hamilton remained a few moments in silence, apparently lost in contemplation, while a saddened and melancholy expression stole over his face. Do "coming events cast their shadows before"? With a deep sigh he remarked to his friend as he slowly rose from the ground, "It is growing rather late, we had better go back to camp."

The evening shadows had deepened and lengthened, till the soft, dim twilight rested on the hills about them. Gathering up their guns and equipments the two, slowly and with swinging, graceful strides, descended the hill, and their voices grew less and less distinct as their lithe, manly forms gradually disappeared in the darkening shadows of the narrow ravine below, while the declining sun, slowly sinking over the mountain tops, cast a deep gloom throughout the wooded hollow of oak and maple; and nothing disturbed the almost painful stillness but the melancholy hootings of a lonely owl, perched on the dead limb of a towering pine on the neighboring hillside.

Hamilton was a little above medium height, and had

a slender, graceful figure, but removed from all charge of effeminacy. His eyes were clear gray, with a tender and thoughtful expression. When animated they were full of life and feeling. His mouth was small and sensitive, and the rounding lips had a slightly sensuous curve. Hair dark brown, and inclined to be wavy. Exceedingly winning in his manner, few men could be more agreeable and fascinating when so disposed.

Altogether, he was a type of man few women could withstand, a fact of which no one was better aware than was Hamilton himself, and upon which he was apt at times, to presume. Generous, impulsive, and extremely susceptible to the charms of the fair sex, ever since he could either fall in love or get in debt, he had never been entirely free from the one, or out of the other, and was liked by every man, woman, and child in Armour. Full of *bonhomie*, gay and witty, bright and cheerful, he was the life of every social gathering in the place, and no party was considered complete without him. His appearance was as certain to call forth warm expressions of welcome, from both old and young, as was that of his friend Conyngham, with his cold, moody, and embarrassed manner, to throw a damper upon any group to which he chose to attach himself.

Yet Conyngham, when necessary to the attainment of any object, could at times render himself both pleasant and agreeable. His father's position as one of the leading business men, and the most prominent politician in the state, with the young man's prospective wealth and correct habits, gave him a great advantage over the young men of the place.

Malcolm Conyngham was tall, and fine looking, with fair hair, cold, blue-gray eyes, and strongly marked fea-

tures, which, in repose, were as immovable and devoid of feeling as if cast in steel. He would have been called a handsome man, but for the expression of suspicious watchfulness in his eyes,—an expression habitual and almost feline in its intensity—a look that never failed to produce a sense of discomfort and feeling of disagreeable embarrassment on those with whom he conversed, when there was no selfish point to be made.

A great catch in the matrimonial market, not only in Armour, but throughout the state, he had, even at this early age, passed through several spirited campaigns at fashionable watering places, but had so far proved invulnerable to the wiles of scheming mothers with marriageable daughters.

He had early been initiated by his father, into the mysteries of the banking business, a business in which Conyngham Senior had accumulated a fortune, and in which he was still largely engaged; and at an age when most young men were taken up with flirting, courting the muses, and having a good time generally, Malcolm Conyngham was all absorbed in making money.

Amongst men he had few friends, and the only person with whom he was at all on terms of intimacy was young Hamilton.

CHAPTER II.

IN THE GLOAMING.

IN the pleasant and tastefully furnished parlor of one of the handsomest houses of Armour, sat Mrs. Adair and her daughter Fannie.

The latter had just graduated from Madame Clements' "Fashionable Institute for Young Ladies," in a neighboring city.

The evening was damp and chilly, and Fannie sat close to the low grate fire, with her pretty little feet coquettishly resting on the fender, busied with some bright crochet work.

The sweet, fresh, young face of the daughter, and the dignified, matronly form and features of the mother, made a charming and home-like picture as they sat chatting to one another in the gloaming.

"Fannie, where has Lawrence Hamilton been for the last two weeks? I have missed him from church now for two Sabbaths. If he is in town he certainly knows you are at home, and it seems strange that he should not call."

"I met Emily Charlton yesterday," said Fannie, "and she said he and Malcolm Conyngham were having their annual fall hunting; but they must be home now. I saw Malcolm go into the bank this morning. As for calling on me, I don't think Lord Hamilton concerns himself much about young ladies at his own home. He reserves all his fascinations for strangers. The girls at madame's

had all heard of him, and Lou was anxious to meet him. They say he had quite a flirtation with Min Stewart last summer. Her sister Lil was one of my room-mates, and Min's letters were so full of Larry Hamilton this, and Larry Hamilton that, that I became fairly sick of hearing the name.

"They rode on horseback a great deal together — did they not?" queried Fannie, in a tone which displayed more interest than so simple a question warranted, especially when coming from a young lady who had, a few moments before, declared she was sick of hearing of the gentleman.

Mrs. Adair quickly noticed the change in her daughter's voice whilst making this inquiry, and looking up, a shade of anxiety for a moment passed over her kind, motherly face, unnoticed, however, by Fannie, as her mother quietly replied that she believed she had seen him with Mrs. Ashton's visitors; but as to whether he had been particularly attentive to any one of them, she had not heard.

"It is very pleasant to have a cavalier like Larry on hand" continued Fannie, "who has plenty of money and the leisure and inclination to spend it; especially when one has visitors. Besides, he has seen so much more of the world and society than most of our young men, and is always ready for a flirtation with every girl who comes along, provided she is stylish and a stranger. I hardly know what I would do to entertain Lou if he were to go away. Emily says town is insufferably dull, and I am afraid she will have a stupid time. I do hope Larry will be home when she is here;" and Mrs. Adair could not repress a smile as Fannie again returned to the distasteful subject of Lawrence Hamilton. "It has been over a year now since he carried my satchel to the train for me. I remember I was so provoked at him for quizzing me as if

I were a child. I suppose he still thinks of me as a little girl, and I intend being very dignified to both him and Malcolm Conyngham. The girls have completely spoiled them, and Emily says when there are any strange girls visiting here, they are shamefully indifferent to their home friends, so that we have both determined not to be made conveniences of by them, but on Lou's account I will have to be agreeable for the time being."

"Your father thinks it is about time for Larry to get into some business, or attach himself to one of the professions. He certainly cannot be satisfied with the aimless life of pleasure he has been living for several years past ; and the world has a right to expect of a man, possessing the talents young Hamilton undoubtedly has, something more than the life of an idle man of fashion. Malcolm Conyngham has not half the brains that Larry has, yet your father says he is making money, and a fine business reputation for himself."

"I guess, mother, Malcolm Conyngham is naturally fonder of money than Larry. When a boy, he had a very unenviable reputation for being both tricky and selfish. You know brother Ralph said at school he was always dicking with, and taking advantage of, the duller and younger boys ; and why Larry always liked him Ralph could never understand, unless, being such good company, Malcolm found it pleasant and convenient to have him with him, and on that account was more agreeable to him than to others. He says Larry gives Malcolm credit with being more generous and clever than he seems, and believes he will some day be a great man."

"If young Hamilton were forced by circumstances," said Mrs. Adair, "to make his own living, or would marry some good, sensible woman, and resolve to give up

the pursuit of pleasure, he could become almost anything he chose ; but that was the door-bell — was it not ? ”

As Fannie stepped quickly to the window, and looked out into the street, her face brightened, and quickly running through the hall, without answering her mother, there followed a few, quick, joyful exclamations, and that shower of interrogatories, that invariably takes place on the meeting of two young lady friends after a whole day's absence from one another. A few moments later Fannie ushered into the room a tall, slender girl, with large, expressive, eyes. Fine eyes they were, full of meaning and light. She had delicate and sensitive features, and a small, well-shaped head, gracefully poised on a lithe, slender figure ; her hair was very dark brown, and her eyes deep violet blue ; at times, they appeared almost black, probably owing to the long, dark eyelashes. Her complexion was the delicate tint of the tea-rose.

This was Fannie's intimate friend, Emily Charlton, and as the young lady crossed the room to greet Mrs. Adair, nothing could be more charming than the willowy and undulating grace of her movements. Magnetic and attractive, bright and fond of admiration, Emily Charlton never lacked admirers, and while she lacked the intellectuality of Fannie Adair, and possessed none of her friend's bright and sparkling wit or talent in repartee and conversation, that rendered Fannie such a favorite amongst the older people and the more thoughtful of the younger ones, yet in large companies, or at a general party, Emily always appeared to better advantage than Fannie, as she was naturally of a more calculating and manoeuvring disposition. Her inborn love of admiration unconsciously encouraged the advances of her gentlemen friends, and led her to greet them with a warmth and cordiality that never

failed to interest them, and make them her warm admirers.

After seating themselves Fannie exclaimed, "Oh, mother, isn't it too bad; Mrs. Ashton is going to give a large party next week, and Lou will not be here until the week after."

"You had better write to your friend, and have her come next week," replied her mother.

"I would, but she expects to visit her aunt in Albany before coming here."

"Are you expecting Miss Emory so soon?" Emily inquired, with an expression that afterwards puzzled Fannie. "Of course Larry Hamilton will be on hand, dancing attendance as usual to strangers. What geese they are to let him flirt with them as he does! They have completely spoiled him."

"Why, Emily, I always thought you and Larry were particular friends," said Mrs. Adair, somewhat surprised at the latent irritation which her tone unmistakably betrayed.

"It is enough to provoke any one," pouted Miss Emily; "when any strange young lady visits here, we are secondary considerations, and merely satellites revolving around that bright particular star Lord Hamilton's passing whim or fancy chooses to select for us; and after they leave, he has the impertinence to come to us for sympathy and condolence for their absence. Last summer, when he asked Min Stewart and me to go horseback riding, he procured Min that gray pony of Hunter's, and that great unsightly giraffe of Jacobs' for me. I declare, when he brought him to the door, with his neck stretched out like a crane, and asleep on his feet, and I saw Min, nearly purple, trying to keep from laughing outright at the ridiculous figure I cut,

and Mr. Hamilton, of course, very busily engaged in fixing the saddle, I could have cried with vexation."

"You know it is very difficult sometimes to get a good lady's hackney," mildly interposed Mrs. Adair, while endeavoring to suppress an amused smile at Emily's description of her "Rozinantes."

"But that was not the worst of it. I had to lay my whip on at every step to keep up with them, and at last Min's patience was exhausted, and she rode off and left us. Larry offered to exchange horses with me; but I preferred being mortified to death to having my neck broken on that black of his, and declined. We were not very sociable during that ride, I assure you, for finally, provoked beyond all measure, with the greatest exertion and a free application of the whip, I succeeded in getting the beast into a slow canter just as we were descending a hill. When half-way down he suddenly stopped stock still; and, expecting nothing of the kind, away I went over his neck, rolling over and over in the dust, but was fortunately not hurt. I might have been killed, but was dreadfully frightened when I found myself lying on my back and that great ugly animal standing right over me, and gazing down upon me with half closed eyes, tranquilly and contemplatively, as if wondering what in the world I was doing there. And just think, while I was lying there, wild with terror, and striking blindly up at him with my whip, and screaming 'go away! go away!' for fear he would trample me to death, would you believe it, there sat that scamp, Larry Hamilton, leaning over his horse and laughing right in my face. I was never so mortified and angry in my life, and will not forgive him for that shameful trick as long as I live."

Fannie could no longer restrain herself at the thought of the sorry figure the proud and sensitive Emily must

have cut before the city visitor and a gentleman with so keen a sense of the ridiculous as Hamilton possessed, and peals of merry laughter rang through the room, as she gazed on the flushed and indignant face of her friend. Her merriment was so contagious that even Emily herself reluctantly joined in, and laughed at the remembrance of her own ludicrous plight.

After laughing heartily at this adventure, told in Emily's inimitable style, the ladies began to discuss the thousand and one details of that never-failing topic of feminine conversation, dress and dressing, and Mrs. Ashton's coming party.

CHAPTER III.

LIBERTE, FRATERNITE, ET EGALITE.

ALTHOUGH Hamilton and Conyngham had been reared with the same social influences and surroundings, in their tastes, temperament, and mental and moral make-up, they were as dissimilar as are the Torrid and Frigid Zones. Only by tracing back to the different races from which they sprung could one in any measure account for this great difference, nor explain the divergence in the after lives of these two young men; for both apparently pursued the same aims and were actuated by the same ambitions.

The founder of the Hamilton family, of which Larry was the last male representative, was Col. Lawrence Hamilton, an Irish gentleman of considerable means and influence in his own country. His hatred of tyranny and oppression in every form as well as the natural Irish love of excitement, had led him to an active participation in one of those fruitless and periodical attempts of that unhappy people to free themselves from England's hated rule, after the failure of which he found it prudent to leave for America.

Of fine person, gay, social and with rare address and a winning manner, Hamilton was not long in Philadelphia, the city he had chosen for his future home in the colonies, before he became a great favorite in the charming society which distinguished that city then, and for which it is still noted to this day. Already a pronounced rebel and a

France, lost heart, and succumbing to a malarial fever, he passed away, murmuring to the last of the green fields and babbling brooks of "Sunny France."

His friend adopted Rachelle, and at his house she met and learned to love the handsome and agreeable young Hamilton. They were married, and had for a short time enjoyed as happy wedded life as is generally vouchsafed to mortals, when the storm, which had for some time been brewing between the mother country and the colonies, burst forth in all its fury. The report of the first gun at Lexington, made the blood tingle in the veins of every patriotic man throughout the land ; and Hamilton was among the first to offer his services to Congress. He raised a company in time to participate in the unfortunate blunder of Long Island, where his regiment was almost decimated, and the mortality so great that he at once rose to the rank of colonel ; and throughout the long eight years of that ever-memorable struggle, he was distinguished for his uniform kindness and courtesy to his brother officers and men, and for his gallantry on the field.

When peace was declared he found himself, like many others, in rather straitened circumstances, and with a small family on his hands. For a nominal sum he purchased a large tract of wild land, in what was then called the backwoods, and where now stands the town of Armour.

Finding here rich deposits of iron ore, Hamilton communicated the fact to several of his former friends, who had, more prudently or perhaps less generously, managed to save some of their patrimony, and entering into partnership, by a few years of energy and intelligent effort, he was soon again in prosperous circumstances, and enabled to educate his children in Philadelphia, and renew his intimacy with his friends of *ante-bellum* days.

His success attracted others, and a charming society soon sprang up in what had been, but a few years before, a howling wilderness.

These old iron masters led baronial lives, and maintained all the refined courtesies and hospitalities that so distinguished the wealthy planters of Maryland and Virginia in those days.

In the course of time, the old families had so married and intermarried with one another, that there were few who were not connected by ties of blood, and the individual and characteristic family traits became intensified in their descendents.

Not having experienced the mutations of fortune their ancestors had, and not feeling the wholesome spur of necessity, their sons led the careless and thoughtless lives of *bon vivants* and gay cavaliers, yielding themselves up entirely to the pleasures of the hour, and spending their lives, their health, and their fortunes in flirting and dancing, hunting, horse-racing, and gaming.

The two last named amusements were not only recognized at that time as proper and legitimate, but were practiced by the most staid and sedate old gentlemen of the day. They soon ran through their fortunes, and, piece by piece, the large estates fell into the hands of strangers or money-lenders, or dwindled down to the homestead and a few acres, while their impoverished descendants speculated their social position on marriages with *nouveaux* riches, like their noble English prototypes of to-day and our American heiresses, willing to replenish their exhausted exchequers, and gratify their luxurious and extravagant tastes, by sharing their names and social position for wealth, — family, and social position for money — money for social distinction and influence.

Fast living soon thinned out the old Hamilton family and in the third generation but one of the lineal descendants of Lawrence Hamilton remained to transmit the family name.

This sole survivor was Roger Hamilton, Larry's father, who started in the world poor, and with nothing but his indomitable pluck and energy, and the proud memory of a race, whose errors, while many, had always been on the side of generosity and humanity, and whose *bon-mots* and witty sallies and kind hospitalities are still matters of tradition in that country.

CHAPTER IV.

JUDGE, JURY, AND EXECUTIONER.

ROGER, unfortunately inheriting these tastes and tendencies of his ancestors without the means of gratifying them, was at times reduced to straits that a proud nature like his fairly writhed under, and he struggled desperately to overcome the obstacles between him and fortune.

After finally succeeding far beyond even his most sanguine expectations, he dreaded the effect of the Hamilton love of excitement and pleasure upon his son. With ample means to gratify his inclinations, his great anxiety was to shield him from his own sad and bitter experience, a consideration which finally induced him to entail his estate, giving Larry an assured annual income. To do this necessitated the selection of a trustee during his son's life — a rather humiliating arrangement but which was necessary to the carrying out of his intentions. At the suggestion of his attorney the income was unfortunately left with numerous provisions and conditions, constituting a rather curious system of rewards and punishments, with the trustee as judge, jury, and executioner, and with no corresponding restraint, check, or responsibility whatever on the part of the trustee, but the mere verbal promise that its provisions would be carried out in the same kind and liberal spirit: a father would naturally be supposed to exercise, under the same circumstances, with his own children; a very hazardous experiment this was, to give the complete control of one

man's fortune, and, to a dangerous extent, the shaping of another's future career, to one who was bound by no ties other than pecuniary gain and a love of power.

With some temperaments a will of this kind might possibly have resulted differently, and with a wise and kindly-disposed trustee, especially if the ward was easily influenced and submissively disposed. Larry Hamilton was neither, but a high-spirited and hot-blooded young fellow, who, while full of kind and generous impulses and naturally given to easy, pleasure-loving ways, was as determined and ambitious to wield power, as was the Honorable John Littlejohn, his trustee, determined to make him submit to it.

The latter was, as the world goes, an honest man and an able lawyer, but passionately fond of power. Narrow, illiberal and tyrannical, he prided himself on his professional abilities and his immaculate Christianity. The leading elder of the fashionable church in Armour and superintendent of its Sabbath school, he loved to "pray standing in the synagogue" where he could be "seen of men" and made "broad his phylacteries."

At this period of his career he was looked up to, by the circle of obsequious satellites and admirers who are always found ready to bow down to and worship the rising sun of success, as the very embodiment of the perfect man, and of that grand religion, the very corner-stone and foundation of which is based on the universal brotherhood of mankind, charity and the forgiveness of our enemies.

Yet no Comanche brave ever engaged with more ardor in the pursuit of an enemy's scalp than did the Hon. Littlejohn pursue to the death, with the most relentless hate, the man who crossed his path, or refused to acknowledge his superiority by the most unqualified and absolute abne-

gation of all manly independence. His intercourse with those in his power was marked by the most intolerant haughtiness, and with others, by the most perfect contempt for their opinions while allowing no one to dispute his own.

To a few leading business men and politicians of the State, he at this time assumed a liberality and *bonhomie* that was utterly at variance with his true nature ; but the absolute necessity for the furthering and carrying out of the ambitious career he had marked for himself compelled him, for the time being, to dissemble to every one but those who were completely at his mercy.

Such was the man in whose hands were placed the fortune, and to a very perilous extent, the shaping of young Hamilton's career. At seventeen the young mind is very pliable, and easily biased for good or evil by surrounding circumstance. The possession of an independent income at an early age, a bright imagination and complete master of one's own actions, Byron said, was one of the most unfortunate and dangerous positions a young man could be placed in ; and this was the situation in which Larry Hamilton found himself. During his minority, with no kind and restraining hand to warn, and with ample means, he had led a rather wild life, running into numerous excesses.

But his keenly-sensitive and proud nature revolted from common vice, and, fortunately for him, a delicate organization entailed so much suffering after any excess that a continuous course of dissipation was almost a physical impossibility, and swift suicide in a very painful form.

He matured quickly, and when he had attained his majority was already a thorough man of the world.

The contrast between his gay life and that of the steady-

going young men of the place, while it diminished his influence in certain ways, on the other hand enhanced his reputation. He was looked upon as a *lusus naturæ*, and the charitably disposed divided the human race, for his sake into men, women, and Larry Hamilton.

CHAPTER V.

MRS. ASHTON'S PARTY.

THRONGS of handsome men and well-dressed women, were congregated in the spacious and elegantly-furnished parlors of the old Ashton mansion, and as young Hamilton and Emily Charlton passed through the halls, the dazzling lights reflected from the old-fashioned chandeliers, the delicate perfume of many flowers, the sweet strains of waltzing music, the dancing, the rustling of silk, like a breeze through tree tops, and the undertone of pleasant excitement which generally pervades such occasions, formed a scene well calculated to animate even the older people.

The hostess was in ecstasy at the *éclat* with which the affair was passing off, and charmed with the buoyant animation with which all the guests seemed inclined to contribute their quota to the evening's amusement.

During a pause in the dancing, while the guests were chatting and enjoying themselves, there was a subdued hush, and every eye was turned to the door, as Ralph Adair entered the room with his sister and her New York friend, Miss Emory, who had arrived the evening before. It was an embarrassing moment for Fannie, this being her first party, and while outwardly calm and self-possessed, she afterwards declared she was almost ready to faint when she realized the sensation that their appearance had evidently produced.

Her *début* was a decided success, as her friend, al-

though a very refined and stylish-looking girl, did not for a moment compare with Fannie in personal charms. Fannie's beauty was of the kind the old masters of the Titian school raved over, — petite, well rounded and voluptuous in form, with sparkling dark blue eyes, and hair of that rich, bright shade of auburn so very difficult to describe, a blending of dark auburn with the golden tint, but with a warm reddish hue predominating ; she also possessed the brilliant complexion which generally accompanies this color of hair. Her skin was so perfectly transparent, that often, to her own embarrassment and the admiration of others, every emotion was plainly depicted in the ebb and flow of her rich coloring.

The unusual brilliancy of her complexion, indeed, invariably attracted attention, and was frequently a cause of great annoyance to the young girl, especially on the crowded thoroughfares of a large city. Her mouth simply defied description. The upper lip was short, and in its delicate and exquisite curving reminded one of Cupid's bow, while the nether was full and pouting. It was a sensitive and mobile mouth, and when her deep carmine lips were parted, in smiling and animated conversation, disclosing the even, white teeth, the word rose-bud was but a poor comparison. It was the mouth of a rich, loving disposition, and clearly intended by Dame Nature for the express purpose of kissing.

Her face was pure and artless as a child's, but by no means characterless ; as every one soon found, after a few minute's conversation with Fannie Adair, that with all her pleasant and artless gayety, there was an undercurrent of thoughtfulness and good sense that surprised them. Without any pretensions to being a literateur, she was exceedingly well informed, and a great reader. Her mother

had watched her course with the greatest care and solicitude, and encouraged in her a taste for reading of a higher order, and on subjects generally considered too solid for young ladies in their teens.

Of a happy disposition, and possessing a bright and sunny temper, she was at the same time high-spirited, and a young lady who could always take her own part when it was necessary to do so. And this was the young lady who, with the assistance of her friend, Emily Charlton, intended to settle the pretensions of the two young gentlemen who had lorded it so long, socially, in Armour; and she was confident in her ability to rout the haughty enemy, "horse, foot, and dragoons."

As the three stood conversing together, they were soon joined by Malcolm Conyngham and Emily Charlton. A quadrille was forming, and Conyngham, who was rather diffident about showing off his awkwardness in dancing, soon found himself going through the intricate figures of a new quadrille with Fannie's friend, Miss Emory. This lady had evidently practiced to perfection the art of making herself attractive and agreeable, — especially so to gentlemen, — and Conyngham, very much to his surprise, found his hands alternately touching the lovely palms of the stranger, — a sensation which, for his cold nature, was decidedly novel and pleasant.

She was an accomplished and graceful dancer, and while helping him through the intricate figures, she did it without embarrassing him, and, at the same time, with such exquisite tact, that she made a decided and pleasant impression on him; and when the dancing was over, as they promenaded the room, flushed with pleasure and excitement, she assured him with a silvery smile, that he was a splendid dancer.

While Malcolm knew he was not, he could not but help feeling pleased at her evident desire to relieve him of any sensitiveness he may have felt over the mistakes he had made; and as he listened to her lively and intelligent conversation on different topics, and looked into her bright, animated face, he sighed, and wondered if he would always be a bachelor. And O, sordid of mortals! he wondered, also, if she was as wealthy as rumor had credited her with being.

It was apparently love at first sight; and as they rejoined the group, while Emily was congratulating him on his success in going through the new figures, he stared vacantly, and replied, "Yes, yes; I believe so," in such an absent manner, that Fannie rallied him with having lost his head as well as his heart, and declared she would warn her friend of what a gay deceiver he had proven in the past.

"Emily has kept me well-informed of all that has happened since I left," she laughingly remarked, "and I feel it incumbent on me, as her friend, to enlighten Lou a little, or she might think you were really the unsophisticated youth you have been trying to make her believe you are."

"I guess Miss Emily does not consider me so dangerous as to require any warning," replied Conyngham, rather dryly.

He never liked badinage, particularly before strangers, as it infringed too much on his *fra-dig*.

"Where is Larry Hamilton?" suddenly inquired Conyngham. "I have not seen him dancing all the evening, and it is not often he misses the opportunity."

"There he stands, over by the window, looking as blue as if he had lost his last friend. What in the world is wrong with him," queried Emily, with some feeling;

"why, I never saw Larry Hamilton look so *distract* in my life."

"I suspect he and his trustee have had another of their little differences," laughed Ralph, "and Littlejohn has likely been scolding him over his bills, or stopped the money on him; that is about the only thing I know that would make Hamilton sad. And a humiliating position it is for a high-spirited young fellow like Hamilton," he continued, "to have his money doled out to him in trifling sums, like a school-boy; my only wonder is that he don't have the blues all the time."

"Yes," said Conyngham, "this thing of being a poor rich man, with all the refined tastes and sensitiveness of a gentleman, and with the reputation of being wealthy, and not allowed to handle his principal, is hard enough, but it is much more mortifying to have even his income tied up with irritating provisos. I often wonder he don't get completely disgusted, and let the whole thing slide."

The object of these remarks stood, with arms folded, leaning by a window at the other end of the room, somewhat retired from the rest of the company, evidently in a deep reverie, and far from the present scene and its hilarity.

The bright eyes of beautiful women, sparkling with animation and joyous excitement, appeared to have no attraction for him; his face expressed so much of mental suffering, and such an absence of hope and deep shade of gloom, that pretty little Fannie Adair's sympathetic heart warmed towards him, and she forgot all about her determination to be dignified and haughty. As their eyes met, Hamilton started from his reverie as if from a dream, aroused himself, and seemed determined to make up for his former unsociability by striving to be agreeable; and,

CHAPTER VI.

BETTER THAT HE WERE DEAD.

As Ralph Adair had correctly surmised, the cause of Hamilton's depression early in the evening was owing to an interview he had had with his trustee, and, as was usually the case, was like bringing together flint and steel.

Having attained his majority a few months before, and fulfilled every condition necessary in order to claim several thousand dollars of surplus income which had accumulated during his minority, he had called upon his trustee that afternoon, and insisted on its being paid over to him ; but, as usual, the Hon. Littlejohn had found some technical reason for withholding it, and the interview had not only been rather flrid, but ended even more angrily than such interviews generally did.

The climax was reached when Littlejohn produced a letter, which was in answer to one he had a few days previously written, at Hamilton's urgent request, to a gentleman at the head of a large business enterprise in a neighboring city, asking for him a position in which he could acquire some practical knowledge of business affairs, without regard to salary, in order to enable him to judiciously and intelligently invest some capital, which, by his father's will, he would in a few years be entitled to, providing it met the approval of his trustee, and that he be engaged at the time in some legitimate pursuit.

Larry had succeeded, by the most humiliating and con-

stant urging during the last year, in persuading Littlejohn to write a number of letters of this kind ; but from the fact that he had never been permitted to read them, and judging from the tenor of the answers, he felt confident the recommendations were not at all flattering to him, and were calculated to injure him. Reading their replies to Larry always seemed to give Littlejohn the greatest amusement and satisfaction, and they never failed to irritate Hamilton to the highest degree.

This one he now produced. "Judging from his unctuous and unusually bland manner, it must be exceedingly unpleasant to me," Larry said to himself, as Littlejohn, with an expression of the greatest benevolence, settled himself back into his easy chair ; and after two or three preliminary clearings of the throat, proceeded, while carefully noting the effect of each line on his hearer, to roll out, as if it were a sweet morsel, from under his tongue, the following :—

PHILADELPHIA, Oct. 25, 1861.

HON. JOHN LITTLEJOHN,—

"Yours, in which you asked me if I could find some position, in one of my establishments, for a ward of yours, named Lawrence J. Hamilton, received.

"I had a nephew who answered your ward's description exactly, and, according to your account of his disposition and habits, the two were much alike.

"In order to reform him we sent him off on a whaling voyage for a two years' cruise, hoping it would either kill or cure him. It did neither, and at the expiration of that time he returned, only confirmed in his former bad habits ; and even worse than before. Much to the relief of all his relatives and friends he died a short time after ;

and I think it would be better for your ward and his friends if he would go and do likewise.

“Very truly yours,

“CALEB COPPE.”

At the conclusion of this heartless and cruel letter, Littlejohn could no longer restrain himself, and his mean and unmanly satisfaction, as he gazed at poor Larry's amazed and indignant countenance, seemed only to increase his untimely and heartless hilarity.

With an angry imprecation and a loud oath, Hamilton, stung to madness, lost all control of himself, and, picking up his hat, he rushed from the room and the hated presence of his tormentor, grinding his teeth with suppressed rage and anger, and biting his lips until the blood started.

The iron, from that moment, entered Hamilton's soul, and he was a changed man thereafter, with a fixed and determined purpose in life. Henceforth, he would live to show the world and this cold and cruel tyrant that it would not be better for himself and his friends that he were dead, and he resolved that he would yet live to see the day when he would compel this heartless man to acknowledge the fact and regret the course he had pursued towards him.

Hurrying home and locking himself in his room, he threw himself on a lounge, and gave himself up to gloomy and dismal forebodings.

The cheerful blaze of the grate-fire failed to impart any of its brightness to his gloomy and perturbed mind. The proud fellow was completely broken and humbled.

That his worst enemy could have given him such a character he could scarcely believe possible. It was like

a staggering blow in the face, and, with half-closed eyes, he sat wondering if others had formed the same opinion of him as Littlejohn. His heart ached with mortified pride and wounded sensibility.

Hamilton's was one of those finely-fibered and sensitive natures, keenly susceptible to wounding and injury, and as he sat, with his head resting on his hands, in the fast fading twilight, his head dropped lower and lower, while the brooding frown upon his brow darkened into a deep scowl. It was a sad contrast to the usually gay and lively Larry Hamilton.

As he thought of his past life, hollow and unsatisfying, and his fruitless attempts during the last year to connect himself with some business, and his present, dull and hopeless and devoid of endeavor, his future seemed cheerless and forbidding. He had thought of pursuing the study of the legal profession, but Littlejohn had ridiculed the very idea of his ever being enabled to achieve success in it, and so discouraged him by exaggerating the drudgery and the tediousness of the profession, that a less sanguine person than Larry would have been disheartened: and he wound up his peroration by stating that unless a young man was classically educated, it was useless for him to enter the list with the expectations of being anything more than one of the innumerable small pettifoggers and shysters who, under the name of attorneys, manage to eke out a precarious existence, by resorting to practices that no honorable man would stoop to.

The latter argument conclusively settled all doubts in Hamilton's mind. If he had informed himself he would have learned that nearly all our great men are not college graduates.

His was no shallow nature, nor was he content with

feeding on the dry husks of frivolous pleasure. Underneath his light and gay exterior there was another and different side to his character. He was far deeper and more thoughtful than surface indications would seem to denote, and while hitherto a pursuer of trifles, a trifler he was not by any means. Possessing the coolest and most reckless courage, and known to be a man whose determination recognized no obstacles, he was one of those men about whom there always seem to cling a mystery ; and while as winning as a woman, he had an iron will and an adaptability which made him feared by the worst types of men. The most elegant of gentlemen in the drawing-room, he was one of the most dangerous of men in a quarrel, although never the aggressor.

That he would lead an ordinary life, no one believed who knew him well, and if in the future the fickle goddess of fortune offered him half a chance, he would not be slow to avail himself of her kindness. He had great ambition to make a brilliant name for himself, and was anxious to make money ; not, like his friend Conyngham, to gratify a natural avarice, and a brutal lust for power, but for the pleasure it would bring to him and his friends, and the gratification of a natural and creditable ambition to make for himself some reputation.

Mrs. Hamilton and Larry were more like brother and sister than mother and son. Her boy was her idol as she was his, and if Larry had not naturally been inclined towards an ambitious career, his love and desire to please his mother would have been of itself more than a sufficient stimulus.

While the blow from Littlejohn had been a cruel one, and hurt him to the death, no doubt it was the very thing

needed to crystalize his wavering purposes, and fully determined him to change his mode of life.

He had gone to Mrs. Ashton's party in a most desperate and unhappy frame of mind, but the pleasant party, and Fannie Adair's sweet presence and cheerful conversation had acted like a glass of old wine upon him ; and when he awoke the next morning, and looked out on the clear, bright sunshine of a beautiful, bracing October day, the storm had blown over, and all within was peaceful and serene.

At twenty-one, one does not feel very sad very long.

As he rode by the Adair mansion that morning, he could scarcely refrain from looking back, in order to catch another glimpse of Fannie's bright face in the window. And he wondered if she was as bright and lovely at home as he had found her to be in society. "If she is," he mentally exclaimed, "that man who is fortunate enough to win her will secure a prize."

CHAPTER VII.

CUPID ON HORSEBACK.

MISS EMORY'S visit seemed to revive the drooping gayeties of the quiet, old town ; and after her arrival the place was as lively in a social way, as even these pleasure-loving young people could have desired.

Horseback parties were the order of the day, and furnished the principal amusement. These riding parties generally consisted of Ralph and Fannie Adair, Miss Emory and Emily Charlton, and of course, Lords Conyngham and Hamilton.

That so many young people could be thrown together under circumstances so pleasant, and so favorable to the development of the tender passion, and escape the fiery darts of Cupid, was hardly probable ; and the little god had not failed to avail himself of the golden opportunity, but had been unusually active, and, for the time being, seemed to have established himself permanently with the party, and devoted to them his undivided attention.

Like most of the young people of wealthy families in small country places, they were all good riders, and thoroughly at home on horseback. The amusements, as a rule, in these places, are so few that the keeping of horses by those who have the means, and plenty of leisure, becomes almost a necessity, where the refined recreations of the rostrum and the opera, and the excitement and advantages of a large and constantly changing society are denied them.

Emily and Fannie were both dashing and accomplished *equestriennes*, and could vie with their gentleman friends in graceful and fearless riding; but, unfortunately for Miss Emory, even with the best hackney that Conyngham could procure, she made but a sorry figure, and, at a rapid pace, clung to the saddle,—a position which rendered graceful riding out of all question. Often unable to keep up with their rapid pace, she was compelled to follow at a more moderate gait; and Malcolm was only too well satisfied to remain with her, and congratulated himself on the good fortune which afforded him such fine opportunities for love making.

• Of course, Ralph was not expected to ride with his sister, and thus Larry generally rode with Fannie,—an arrangement not entirely satisfactory to either Emily Charlton or himself. For several years back the two had been constantly together, and, without suspecting it, they had become more attached to each other than they were aware of.

Emily had such a confiding way of nestling up to him, and was so dependent on his society, that it not only flattered him, but, unconsciously, secured for her a dangerously warm place in his affections. As yet, he had never thought it worth while to analyze his feelings; and he always looked upon her as a very dear friend. But Platonic friendship with a girl like Emily Charlton, was dangerous ground for a young gentleman with ample leisure, a warm imagination, and a free fancy. If in his own mind he had ever seriously contemplated her in a matrimonial light, he had always a fear that her love of admiration and inordinate fondness for dress, which, while now a harmless weakness might, in a married woman, prove to be objectionable traits, and perhaps, in the future, be the

cause of considerable discomfort, if not of actual unhappiness.

She was very ambitious, and he was satisfied that it would go hard with the man who married her, if the day should ever come when he could not gratify her tastes in that direction. Emily was intensely magnetic, and her presence never failed to excite Hamilton's emotional nature to the utmost; but so coy and cautious had she always been, that when carried away by the impetuosity of his feelings, and about to make a declaration, she would, at the dangerous moment, and in some incomprehensible way, drift him away from his intentions, although, at the same time, with eyes beaming full upon him with the most tender and ardent expression, but conveying to him a vague impression that, if he attempted any advances he would most certainly be repulsed, and probably lose her friendship and regard.

Emily thought of Larry as a friend who had grown near to her through the natural cords of sympathy and association. The truth was, they were both enamored of each other, and at that stage of *la grande passion* when too precipitate action will mar its perfect completion; but with her the glamour of love had not advanced far enough to blind her judgment. While both romantic and sentimental, yet when viewing her future, even at this stage, she was perfectly well aware of the risk she ran in marrying a man of Hamilton's unstable habits. At the same time, if she had consulted her own heart, and if worldly considerations could have been made an odd factor, or have been left entirely out of consideration, he was the man she would have chosen for her heart's idol, and he alone could have perfectly satisfied her loving disposition.

In their temperaments, and in the intensity of their

feelings, they were as much alike as a man and woman could be.

But Emily could never stimulate Hamilton's more intellectual nature, nor give to him the comfort and rest that he found in the society of Fannie Adair. While Fanny never inspired him with the passion which Emily's presence never failed to excite; yet in time of trouble, or when desiring to converse on any subject which required thought, and above the range of ordinary society topics, it was always to Fannie Adair, and not to Emily Charlton, he went; and it seemed the most natural thing in the world for him to do so.

In view of Miss Emory's visit drawing to a close, the gentlemen had arranged for one grand horseback party before her departure; and the day appointed for the ride could not have been more delightful and propitious. It was Indian summer, and as the gay cavalcade dashed down the long, quiet streets of Armour that soft dreamy afternoon even Mr. Bryon — the staid and dignified banker — turned, and as he gazed after them involuntarily sighed, and envied them their high health and youthful spirits. He would willingly, that moment, have given his fortune to have changed places with them as they swept by, laughing merrily, with their long, gayly-colored plumes curling gracefully from their *chic* little riding hats, and which Larry, always with an eye to the picturesque, had insisted upon each lady wearing; their neat-fitting and elegant habits, prancing steeds, and dashing cavaliers curvetting on their fiery and high-mettled thorough-breds, all combined to make a lively and exciting spectacle.

Both Conyngham and Hamilton were exceptionally fine horseman, even amongst fine riders, although their style

of riding, seats in the saddle, and the management of their steeds, were entirely different and characteristic of the two men, but in perfect keeping and harmony with the respective styles of their masters. As they check their horses and move slowly down the pike, Malcolm sits his horse like a centaur, perfectly immovable in the saddle, and as proud, stately, and upright as a bronze equestrian statue. He is the very ideal of a thorough bred West Point cavalry officer, and his bright, strong, and handsome bay seemed in perfect accord with his master, as, champing his bit, he marched proudly along, with high step, as if keeping time to slow martial music.

Hamilton rode with all the abandon, dash, and careless grace of a natural horseman. Horse and rider seemed moved as if by one impulse, and animated by the same spirit. Swaying with every motion of his beautiful black mare, the two were certainly the embodiment and poetry of motion, and suggested light waltzing music.

Malcolm rode like a Roundhead, Hamilton like a dashing Cavalier.

Leaving the pike they ascended a high hill, which overlooked the surrounding country, the view from which was simply magnificent. After resting their horses for a few moments, Emily proposed a good, wild gallop, to which all joyously assented. Ralph, more thoughtful than the rest of the gentlemen, alighted, and after assuring himself that the saddles were all right, remounted, and giving the girls a few words of caution, as to keeping a tight rein, and holding their horses well in hand, he gave the word go, and off they started at a brisk canter. For two miles the road ran along the brow of the hill, and was as smooth and level as a floor. The canter speedily grew into a wild, mad gallop, and the blood of the riders tingled

with an excitement, which quickly communicated itself to their horses. The gallant steeds, each straining every nerve to out-distance their fellows, flew over the road, while their hoofs scarcely seemed to touch the ground. The wind whistled by them, and a long cloud of dust hung suspended in the air, far in their rear. On, on, they maintained this killing pace for over a mile, when, sweeping like a whirlwind around a sharp curve in the road, some of them were almost unseated, and Larry, in the excitement of the moment unable to resist a spirit of reckless deviltry, rose in his stirrups and gave out a war-whoop an Apache would have envied. The effect, as might have been expected, was startling,—the sudden apparition, the dust and noise, and the unearthly yell, as the cavalcade swept by, nearly frightened some pedestrians out of their wits, and the haste with which the latter ran helter-skelter down the hillside convulsed the party, and finally compelled them to check their mad pace.

They drew rein by a shady, little mountain spring on the roadside. The party, with eyes sparkling and cheeks glowing with pleasure and excitement, dismounted. After quenching their thirst, the ladies proceeded to arrange their habits, while the gentlemen tried the saddles, and, where it was necessary, tightened the loosened girths. After a few minutes' rest they remounted, and slowly walking their tired horses off the steep ridge, descended to the narrow valley below, the road through which was in deep shadow from the overhanging evergreens.

As Fannie and Larry rode some distance behind their companions the latter remarked, in an indifferent tone, while switching the overhanging branches, as they moved leisurely along, "I am going to leave Armour in a few days, Fannie, and perhaps for good."

Hamilton would have been very obtuse not to have observed the incredulous and wistful, anxious look of the young girl, as she quickly turned her face towards him, and asked, in a dazed, startled tone, "Going away!"

"Perhaps for good!"

"What do you mean, Larry?"

"Simply what I say. I am going away to do my duty towards my country, and to try and make a name for myself, as I find it impossible to do that here. My life, for several years back, has been intolerable, and I can endure it no longer. I was never intended for an aimless man of pleasure,—like Guy Norris, for instance, who never, for a moment, feels the qualms of conscience which are ever stirred by ambitious longings; and who is content to be what he is, a mere butterfly of fashion, satisfied to flutter in the sunshine, and sail idly down the river of life, without aim or object beyond the present, and to die at last, unhonored and unsung. But I am not Guy Norris, and am miserable, leading such an existence. No opening being presented here, and feeling somewhat desperate, I have resolved to enlist as a high private in the First Cavalry. Jack Wilmont informs me that there will shortly be an election for a lieutenancy in the regiment, which is now lying near Washington; and, with Jack's influence, I may possibly be enabled to secure the position; and with that end in view, I will enlist in the regiment in a few days."

"A private soldier! Why, Larry, you could never endure the hardships of such a life, and it is the height of folly for you to think of such a thing! You will break down in a month. Can you not get some position at home here?"

"I have tried in every way possible," replied Hamilton,

"but the very fates seemed leagued against me, and no alternative is left me but to enlist."

"If you are determined on going into the army, why not ask General Conyngham to use his influence, and secure you an appointment in the regulars ! You and Malcolm are very intimate friends, and a word from him to his father would be sufficient."

Larry laughed bitterly as he replied, "General Conyngham never gives his influence unless you can make some handsome return, either in a political or pecuniary way, equal to about twice the value of the favor he bestows ; and if ever in after life you should be successful, he will take the credit of having been the architect of your fortune. And should he then ask a favor of you, no matter how great a sacrifice it might involve, even of personal honor, and you should refuse to do his bidding, no bloodhound would dog your steps with more persistent hate than he. As for Malcolm, while we are the best of friends, I know he has too much of his father in him to place myself under obligations to him, and I intend taking the more independent and manly course, and run the risk like other men."

The remainder of the ride that afternoon had little of pleasure for poor Fannie. As they rejoined their companions she endeavored to appear unconcerned, but her dejected appearance was the occasion of some remarks, and the party playfully rallied her on her woe-be-gone countenance.

Numerous inquiries were laughingly made, as to whether they had been quarreling, and Fannie endeavored to reply in the same playful spirit, but failed, and her face continued to wear a sad and thoughtful expression.

Hamilton was in high spirits, and he and Emily Charl-

ton, riding off together at a lively pace, were soon out of sight. After proceeding some distance, they were warned by the appearance of the country, that they had taken the wrong road, a fact which, owing to the dense evergreens and their rapid pace, had heretofore escaped their observation. Turning their horses heads they prepared to retrace their steps, but neither of them seemed impatient or anxious to join their companions. The bright eyes of Emily were sparkling with pleasure, and Hamilton seemed powerless to resist the tender glances of the lovely girl. His heart beat rapidly as he thought that he had never seen her look so bewitching, when suddenly, and with a little exclamation of fright, she reined in her horse and remarked that her saddle was loose. Larry quickly alighted, and on examination found one of the girth-straps broken, to adjust which necessitated Emily's dismounting. As he stood with outstretched arms to receive her, she discovered, on endeavoring to free her foot from the stirrup that it was fastened, as securely as if in a vise. Blushing and with downcast eyes she made him aware of the embarrassing circumstance. It was a delicate matter, with the long riding skirt, first to find the little prisoner, and then to free it; but it was finally accomplished, and with an embarrassed little laugh the glowing, blushing beauty, slipped from the saddle into his arms. As her eyes met his, beaming full upon her, his face illuminated with passionate tenderness, she endeavored to disengage herself; but he quickly caught the beautiful girl in his arms and pressed his burning lips to hers. It was so suddenly and quietly done that Emily was completely taken by surprise, but quickly recovering herself, she bitterly reproached him for taking such an ungentlemanly advantage of her helpless condition. As the indignant beauty regained her

saddle she also recovered her dignity, and turning to her now repentant and humbled cavalier, who was awkwardly making some apologies and endeavoring vainly to excuse himself.

She angrily exclaimed, "Larry Hamilton, do not utter another word. Your conduct this afternoon has ended our friendship forever. Never speak to me again until I can forgive this. You have to-day forfeited all my confidence ; and I can never, as long as I live, retain the slightest respect for you."

Before they arrived home that evening they were better friends than ever.

Verily women are a strange bundle of inconsistencies. They do not even seem to understand themselves when a little in love.

In extenuation of Larry's indiscretion it must be remembered, these two were old and intimate friends and more than half in love with each other, and while Hamilton might give way in an unguarded moment to a great and unexpected temptation, like the one that had just overtaken him, still there was nothing premeditated, or any of that lack of moral principle which marks the libertine.

No man would have scorned more than he to have taken undue advantage of either man or woman ; but there are times in every man's life when, under the same circumstances, the most honorable of men would have acted precisely as he did, provided they had possessed the same temperament.

Conyngham's wooing was not of the ardent and impetuous kind. And as he and Miss Emory rode along in the cool moonlight there was very little said by either which, if overheard by the rest of the party, would have caused them the slightest embarrassment, or could have been construed

as bordering on sentiment. Both were remarkably calculating and secretive natures, and, like all such people, they were not much given to demonstration.

Considered as engaged by their companions, they were, as if by common consent, left together, and before arriving home Conyngham had, in a calm matter-of-fact and purely business-like manner, proposed, and had been as calmly accepted.

During Miss Emory's visit, Conyngham had spent every spare evening at the Adair mansion, and remained so late as to sadly interfere with the old gentleman's hours for family worship. In self-defense the latter was compelled to close the shutters rather more violently than was absolutely necessary and not entirely in consonance with the amiable character Mr. Adair sustained in the community. But it had no effect whatever. Malcolm smiled grimly and remained.

The services were held in the dining-room, and I am afraid they were not conducted in the humble and devotional spirit which should animate such occasions.

CHAPTER VIII.

ALL IS NOT GOLD THAT GLITTERS.

LOUISE EMORY was reputed at Madam Clement's as being the only daughter and sole heiress of a lady of great wealth and high social position in Gotham, and reports of her schoolmates, who had been so fortunate as to receive invitations to visit Mrs. Emory and her daughter, more than confirmed these rumors. In fact, the girls on their return to school never tired talking of the grand style of living of their hostess, of the elegant entertainments, and the distinguished social *célèbres* they had met.

Mr. Emory had been an extensive and very wealthy cotton broker. The bulk of his large fortune he had inherited, and the remainder he had amassed by years of untiring devotion to business.

The Emory's were an old New York family, and had, from the time that the memory of the oldest society hack runneth not to the contrary, moved in the most refined and cultivated circles of the very *crème de la crème* of Knickerbocker society. Their social position had not only always been an assured one, but an exceptionally enviable one.

Most of Mr. Emory's means had been invested in Southern enterprises, and dying several years before the war broke out, his estate being unsettled, the greater part of his handsome fortune was lost. The mansion still remained, and an amount that many persons would have

considered a moderate fortune. But Mrs. Emory had no idea whatever of the value of money, and had never in her life known what it was to deny herself in anything. Every whim and caprice had been gratified, and these habits had become second nature by long years of unrestrained indulgence.

Notwithstanding the expostulations of the executor of the estate, a gentleman who had been one of Mr. Emory's partners and a sincere friend of the family, she continued to live on in the same old, extravagant style, and to spend as lavishly, and entertain as handsomely, as if there were no end to the money.

In one sense, there was some method in her madness. Like a desperate gamester she had staked all on one game, and was playing her last card. All this lavish expenditure was planned and carried on with the single purpose in view, of maintaining their high social position and reputation for great wealth. If this could be continued for a few more years, Lou might, as a reputed great heiress, make a wealthy marriage which would amply compensate their efforts.

She had unquestionably succeeded in maintaining her social and financial reputation, but it was accomplished by sad inroads upon their precious principal. There was no half way now. She had gone too far in the desperate game to retrace her steps; and in a year or so at the furthest, Lou must either succeed or the crash must come; and if the daughter did not fulfil her mother's expectations and marry a rich man, there was nothing left for them but to retire to some quiet country place and move in a more humble sphere. In view of such a very possible contingency, the foolish woman had, with a foresight that had never distinguished any action in her life before,

laid by and determined to keep intact for such an emergency, a sum sufficient to keep them in moderately good style in a small place.

Owing to more than ordinary outlay during the last summer at Saratoga and other expensive watering-places, there had been so many bills to pay on her return, and obligations to cancel, that for the first time in her life she found it impossible to meet them.

In order to escape a financial pressure, she had found it convenient to visit a sister in Albany, and sent Louise on a long visit to her friend and schoolmate, Fannie Adair. When again recuperated financially they could renew the struggle.

Lou was early initiated into her mother's plans and purposes, and knew full well how much their future depended upon her. And in her daughter the mother found an ally as ambitious and scheming as herself.

While at Madame Clement's, Lou had heard of the great wealth and prominence of the Conyngham family, and when Fannie Adair proposed a visit to Armour, she was not at all reluctant to take advantage of the invitation, and while artfully pretending to be very anxious to meet her friend Fannie's *beau ideal*, Larry Hamilton, it was of Malcolm Conyngham she thought, with high hopes of turning their temporary economical shift into a substantial realization of her own and her mother's fond dream.

Through Ralph Adair, Malcolm had been apprised of the prospective visit of the New York heiress, and from one of his sisters, who had graduated a year after Miss Emory had made her appearance at Madam Clement's, he had learned that the rumors of her great wealth were not exaggerated, and that when she attained her majority she

would inherit one half of her father's estate, which rumor had placed at a million.

No more sincere worshipper of Mammon ever bowed to her shrine than Malcolm Conyngham. Even at this early age his avarice was phenomenal, and his inordinate greed for gain knew no bounds. His one single aim in life was the gratification of this sordid appetite, and his only maxim was, "to get money, honestly if he could, but to get money."

His attentions to Miss Emory at Mrs. Ashton's party were premeditated, and with the most mercenary of ends in view. He would have married the girl had she been as homely as sin itself, provided she had, beyond all doubt, possessed the large fortune she had been credited with.

He was very agreeably surprised, on meeting her, to find a young lady of more than ordinary grace and refinement, with an elegant figure, and that which he admired more than anything else in a woman, excepting a large fortune, splendid style, a dignified bearing, and a thorough knowledge of society, while to these attractions she added a quick intellect, and more intelligence than is generally met with in society women.

Very much to his astonishment, in a short time he discovered he loved the girl with as much ardor as one of his cold and selfish nature could love any one; but at the same time he was indefatigable in endeavoring to ascertain definitely, and beyond all possibility of doubt, if she really inherited the wealth reported to be awaiting her.

Malcolm Conyngham was not the only one who was fascinated with the stylish heiress. Ralph Adair worshipped the bright goddess afar off, and in his good, honest, manly heart, he successfully buried the secret of his hopeless attachment. His sister Fannie never suspected the cause

of Ralph's unusual solicitude for her visitor's comfort, and his abstracted manner when Miss Emory was absent, nor had she noticed how feverishly bright his eyes became in her presence.

From the first he knew that he had no chance with his wealthy rival, and endeavored manfully to stifle his unrequited and hopeless passion, and finally succeeded in doing so, but at the cost of considerable misery, the cause of which not even his most intimate friends had the slightest knowledge.

He was preparing himself for the legal profession in the office of Larry's trustee, Mr. Littlejohn, and as the office was directly opposite his home, between Blackstone and watching his sister's visitor across the way, he was afflicted with a temporary obliquity of vision, which his fellow students feared, if she remained much longer, would become permanent. Poor Ralph often suppressed an inward groan as he watched the two lovers start out on their numerous horseback rides, and vainly endeavored to bear it like a philosopher.

Louise Emory affected a refinement that was not natural to her, although so skilfully was it assumed, that it required a very shrewd judge of feminine nature to detect the false ring in the coin.

Although inclined to scheming and cunning, she had many very pleasant, and one might almost say lovable, qualities; and she was capable of kind and generous action.

CHAPTER IX.

WHAT'S BRED IN THE BONE.

WHEN the great Napoleon issued his famous order, blockading the continental ports to English vessels, during the terrible struggle which was shaking all Europe to its foundations, and while in the height of his wonderful career of conquest and plunder, the business of smuggling became very profitable in Great Britain, and many small traders, not averse to questionable and risky transactions, engaged in it, and in a short time made quite snug little fortunes by furnishing ammunition and supplies to the enemy to be used against their own countrymen.

Amongst this class was James Conyngham, the grandfather of Malcolm, a shrewd, canny, calculating, but unscrupulous and mercenary Scotchman, whose dubious ways and unsavory reputation had made him an object of distrust and dislike amongst his fellow townsmen, while his greed and tyrannical disposition had caused him to be hated and despised, amongst the rough, unprincipled characters he had associated with him in his doubtful business.

This feeling of late had become so intense against him that his stay in Scotland was no longer comfortable or safe. Having acquired sufficient funds to take him to America and set him up in a small business, and being ambitious, he embarked for the land overflowing with milk and honey, where he felt confident, that with such talents as he pos-

sessed, he would certainly find a rich field for amassing wealth, and perhaps become a power in the land.

But he soon found that the qualifications necessary for the making of a successful smuggler in the old world were not calculated to win him either the respect or the patronage of the people he had settled amongst in the new. His fondness for little deceptions, and duplicity, his small cunning, his inability to originate anything within himself, and adaptability for availing himself of the ideas of others, while palming them off on the public as his own ; his furtive and underhanded ways, and utter distaste for bold, open, and manly courses ; his trading in old horses, saddles, bridles, and wagons ; his desire and passion for dealing in pinchbeck jewelry, and in fact for all business, which afforded opportunities for the petty cunning of an unprincipled yet timid nature, — provoked many doubts and unfavorable comments, as to his real nationality, and caused him, ultimately, to be despised.

In those days, a man whose honor and integrity were unquestioned, stood higher, and was more respected by the public, than did that man who successfully accumulated great wealth by the sacrifice of both. James had lived too soon, and it remained for his descendants, born in times more favorable to the perfect development of the peculiar talents of the Conyngham family, to attain the distinction and wealth their ancestor had so fondly dreamed of. After a few years of unsuccessful struggles with adverse fortune, he died, leaving a large family in straitened circumstances.

The sons to a man inherited all their father's mercenary instincts and his lack of moral principle. They were determined to make money, and make it they did ; some by the hard, grinding process of usury, and others by

questionable business transactions, and sharp practices which, while savoring of rascality, were far enough within the letter of the law to save them from the exposure and punishment they so well merited.

With increasing prosperity they discontinued in a great measure the practice of the petty tricks and chicane which had, in their earlier days, made the name of Conyngham a by-word and reproach amongst their neighbors ; and they now prosecuted their schemes of selfish aggrandisement on a grand scale.

One of these brothers, Jacob, having made some money, laid the foundations of a large fortune by loaning money, at terribly usurious rates, to distressed lumbermen, who, in the spring, floated from the upper part of the state large rafts of lumber to Armour. Not finding ready purchasers, and being at expense and anxious to return home, these men submitted to almost any shaving or sacrifice ; and in Jacob they always found an uncle willing to accomodate them,—“ a friend indeed.”

His next operation was securing the appointment as Indian agent under the government, and exchanging the gold, furnished by the government for the payment of annuities to some Indian tribes in the far West, for his own private bank's promise to pay on paper. With these notes he coolly went amongst these innocent and guileless children of the forest, and settled with them on a paper basis, well knowing the one-half of the amount would never reach the bank to be redeemed ; nor caring for the fact that the Indians would get about two or three dollars for every five paid them, on account of the heavy discount on paper so far from home.

Having political aspirations he connected himself with a partisan newspaper, and soon found in the mire of local

politics, and in the sinuous and tortuous windings of our general American political life, a congenial and splendid field for the exercise and perfect development of the Conyngham talent, and soon achieved success and fame.

Early in his career he had married a thrifty and industrious young woman, one who possessed a more than ordinary share of good, common sense, and who, by her economical management, had greatly helped Jacob in amassing a large fortune.

After years of scheming and sordid self-seeking, and by resorting to the most unscrupulous practices, Jacob had succeeded in worming and bribing himself into the highest place but one under the government, and even aspired to the presidency itself, the grand objective point of his ambitious career, and for which he had schemed and intrigued for a quarter of a century. Several times when the prize seemed almost within his grasp, his too-well-known and unparalleled career of venality and corruption roused the people to a sense of their dishonor and a vigorous protest against such a public disgrace, and settled his aspirations for the time being.

Here, high in the councils of a great nation, he sat an everlasting monument of reproach to a people who had quietly and tamely acquiesced in their own shame. And they allowed this man to ride rough-shod over all decent public opinion, and to insolently place himself in the highest tribunal but one in the land, by practices which, in any other country, would have consigned him to prison as a common malefactor, instead of rewarding him with its highest honors, and permitting him to occupy a position which had hitherto been only the reward of brilliant talents, or moral and intellectual superiority.

CHAPTER X.

OUR UNCLES.

ONE short month had made great changes in the gay party which had so enlivened the sleepy old town of Armour during the fall months,—months which had proven so pleasurable to the young people, who, in after life, looked back upon this period of their lives as an oasis in the desert, and dwelt upon its scenes and incidents with fondness and regret.

Larry Hamilton, to the surprise of every one in the town, the great grief of his mother, and regrets of his friends, suddenly left for Washington for the purpose of enlisting as a private in a cavalry regiment, then lying in winter quarters near that city.

Fanny Adair had returned with her friend, Miss Emory, to New York ; and Emily Charlton accepted an invitation from General Conyngham and his family, to spend the winter with them in Washington.

The general had years ago removed from Armour to the State capital, as his increasing political prominence required his presence there most of the time ; and in the winter, when Congress met, he generally closed his house, and spent his winters at the National capital, where his time was taken up with political wire-pulling, smuggling bills through the different committees, and assisting corporations in their nefarious schemes for robbing and

enslaving the people, and perpetuating his own political power.

His family mingled in the gay metropolitan society, hob-nobbed with diplomats, titled noblemen, and railroad kings, and looked down with scorn on those who could not command a million, or who did not occupy the highest offices in civil, army, or navy life. Jacob Conyngham's long career as senator gave to Mrs. Conyngham and her daughters such social advantages as only great wealth and political power (no matter how corruptly acquired) give in a society so peculiar and variegated as is society in Washington.

Malcolm had always remained in Armour, where his presence was now essential to the successful management of their growing and extensive banking business, every detail of which he had completely mastered. Under his shrewd and pitiless management the business had almost trebled. His father was completely absorbed in political affairs, and was only too glad to be relieved of the additional cares and responsibilities which their extensive business required.

Thus early, and with comparatively little effort on his own part, did this fortunate young man succeed to the control of a large and prosperous business, and to his father's immense exchequer. With such advantages it required no original or very great talent on his part to acquire wealth enough to have satisfied, if such a thing were possible, the dreams of avarice itself.

With an old and skilful engineer on the box beside one, it is comparatively easy to learn to run an engine after the roadway is built, and the engine furnished. There are persons who often, by a lucky combination of circumstances, succeed to leading positions without the preliminary drudg-

ing, and brain work so necessary to lay the foundation of fortunes.

Truly some are born to fortunes, others achieve fortunes and others have fortunes thrust upon them ; and Malcolm Conyngham could certainly say he was both born to fortune and had fortune thrust upon him.

The dizzy height to which he now had succeeded with so little effort or exertion on his own part, would have been the ruination of most young men, especially, if they had been socially inclined, and of generous proclivities. But Conyngham's phenomenally cold and selfish nature, and his inordinate fondness for money, and lately of power, two traits characteristic of the Conyngham family, and which he had come by naturally from his ancestors, rendered him utterly impervious to the temptations that most young men would have succumbed to.

He was now completely absorbed in, and cared for nothing but money-getting. Money was his god, and in pursuit of it he never hesitated to trample under foot every noble and generous instinct ; and in the gratification of his lust for gold, he was utterly regardless of the rights and interests of others, and respected them only so far as it enhanced and promoted his own. Outwardly, he was irreproachable in his habits, and a regular attendant of church services. And while a gentleman in appearance and in manners, when he desired to appear so, at heart, he lacked the very first instinct of one, and would break a promise, in an instant, if it was necessary to do so in order to accomplish his purposes. As for generosity or chivalry, the words were not only not in his vocabulary, but the man himself had not the slightest comprehension of the *meaning* of the words.

He possessed all the qualities which, in a more humble

sphere of life would have made him a heartless and successful pawnbroker — a business for which nature had evidently intended him ; but, fortunately for the possessor of such talents, he found the kind of banking business he was now engaged in a congenial pursuit.

In fact, the same talents which, as a rule, are required to make a successful shaver of notes under the *pseudo* patronymic of banker, are the same as are required to make a successful pawnbroker — viz. : heartlessness and greed. Both take the treble amount of collateral necessary for their security, and charge exorbitant and ruinous rates of interest, without a particle of risk to themselves. Like the cowardly jackal and the hyena, do these human prototypes follow the wounded prey ; until, in his last extremity, they finish his misfortunes.

The only difference in the respective callings is in the kind of collateral hypothecated. While the one preys upon, and takes advantage of, the misfortunes and necessities of the poor and needy classes, the other takes advantage of the crippled and unfortunate business men in the community. Both finish what misfortune began.

Why should not *six* gilt balls, with equal appropriateness, represent the banking interests as conducted by some men, as well as *three* gilt ones that of pawnbroking ? The only difference between a mouse-trap and a rat-trap is that the latter is made to catch larger game.

Men following both of these occupations for a long time, acquire a heartlessness and indifference to the suffering and troubles of their fellow-men to an almost incredible degree, and their business in time gives to their countenance a cold immobile look, and their eyes attain a ferret-like sharpness highly suggestive.

It is as impossible to distinguish a successful pawnbroker

from a flourishing banker of the class referred to, as far as general physiognomy goes, as it would be to detect the difference between a political bummer and some congressmen, provided both were equally well dressed and not engaged in their respective callings.

If such a proposition be entertained to exclude butchers from serving on juries, in cases where their vocations are supposed to have obliterated all sympathy for physical suffering, should not, with equal appropriateness, pawnbrokers and a certain kind of bankers be excluded from the jury in civil cases where pecuniary suffering is involved?

There are of course some honorable bankers. There are also some honorable pawnbrokers. They should all confine themselves to their legitimate business, and not attempt to assume the role of senators and city councilmen, where an entirely different order of talent is required. The people want their friends not their enemies to make their laws and execute them.

CHAPTER XI.

WEIGHED AND FOUND WANTING.

It was a cold, crisp morning in January, 1862. Most of the members had returned to their congressional duties after their holiday vacations at home, and Washington society, refreshed and reinvigorated, entered into the winter gayeties with renewed zest and pleasure.

Eleanor and Mary Conyngham were comfortably ensconced, with their friend and guest Emily Charlton, in an elegant little boudoir, by courtesy called a parlor, at Willard's. The trees and branches along the avenues were white with frost, and merry bells tinkled on the frosty air, the sounds being softened by the heavily-curtained windows. The bright glowing grate fire and the luxuriously furnished room, made a cheerful contrast to the wintry scene without. As Eleanor Conyngham sat by the window, watching the moving throngs on the sidewalk, and the elegant equipages dashing down Pennsylvania avenue, she suddenly cried out, "If there is not Larry Hamilton, I do believe!" All were on their feet in an instant, and arrived at the window only in time to catch a glimpse of young Hamilton's graceful figure as he disappeared in the crowd.

"I think it so strange that a gentleman like Larry Hamilton should enlist as a common soldier, and for my part I am very free to say, that I hope he will not mortify us by calling in his uniform, or have the impertinence to

invite us to the opera or any reception," said Mary Conyngham, in her most acidulous tones and with a haughty toss of her elaborately coiffured head.

"You need give yourself no uneasiness on that score," said her sister Eleanor, in the precise, crisp and snappish manner habitual to her, and which she fondly flattered herself as being a charming *hauteur*. "He is a lieutenant now, so Emily said yesterday — did you not?"

"Yes, I did," replied Emily. "As we came from the capitol the other morning Colonel Irving informed me he had been elected to that position shortly after he had enlisted. Larry is in his regiment, and he was very much pleased with him, and said all the officers liked him, he was so frank, gentlemanly, and jovial. I do wish he would call. I am fairly hungry to see some home friends, and am so tired of strangers, even if they are rich and fashionable and great. I would shake hands, with joy too, with old black Uncle Jude, right in the capitol, before all the generals, colonels, and august representatives there assembled."

"Emily," said Mary Conyngham severely, "you must remember it is not exactly in keeping with the eternal fitness of things, for people in our position to associate with mere lieutenants of volunteers. If Larry Hamilton had graduated at West Point, it would have been very different. You know they make such accomplished gentlemen of them there."

"Why I am sure," warmly rejoined Emily, while blushing crimson, "no more polished or refined gentleman can be found in Washington to-day than Lawrence Hamilton, even if he is only a lieutenant of volunteers."

"Oh I know all that," apologetically replied Mary, on witnessing her guest's warm defense of her absent friend; "but here in Washington, owing to father's prominent

position, and out of consideration for the prejudices of the people we associate with, we must in a measure make some difference in our treatment of people which would be unnecessary in other places. But I think Larry Hamilton has too much good sense and knowledge of the world, and especially of the fashionable world, to presume, from the fact that we were accidentally born in the same place, to attempt to resume here the intimate relations which were but natural in Armour."

"Yes," chimed in Eleanor, in her most mellifluous tones, "just imagine, Emily, if we were at Secretary G—'s reception, or at one of Senator L—'s balls, how mortified you would be while conversing with the dashing General C— of the regulars, to have a lieutenant of volunteers approach you with the easy familiarity of an old friend, and request you to dance with him. I can imagine the General's elevated eyebrows and haughty stare while you proceed to introduce your dear friend, Lieutenant Hamilton of the First N. Cavalry!" The very idea seemed appalling to Eleanor, and her smelling bottle was applied vigorously.

"If he calls, Emily, I hope you will excuse yourself. In society here, if a man is not either a cabinet officer, senator, millionaire, or a graduate of either Annapolis or West Point, he has no right to expect any social recognition, and I think it perfectly proper that the lines should be strictly drawn in a National Capital.

"Official distinctions must be and are absolutely necessary to preserve the dignity of the government, so father says."

"No matter, I suppose," replied Emily, "if these high officials are the greatest rascals, boors, and ignoramuses, in the world, if they hold high offices or have plenty of money it entitles them to be treated as gentlemen?"

The conversation was here interrupted by a knock at the door, and a servant appeared with a card on a salver. As he handed it to Mary Conyngham, the latter in the most *nonchalant* manner possible, unblushingly requested him to inform the gentleman the ladies were not in.

It was Larry Hamilton's card.

Emily, ashamed and indignant, quietly smothered her feelings and said nothing, but bitterly reproached herself afterwards for doing so, and despised her own weakness in thus yielding a seeming compliance to the contemptible prejudices and *parvenu* pride of the Conyngham girls. But the fatal defect in Emily's character was her natural inclination to go with power. She had no independence whatever, and was afraid to follow out the dictates of a naturally kindly and affectionate disposition. Hamilton had instinctively suspected this weakness, which had in a measure always caused him to distrust her somewhat, yet she never had been placed in a position that would confirm him in this opinion. His partiality for her had never blinded him to this fatal defect in her character.

Judge Charlton, Emily's father, was a gentleman of considerable wealth and political influence, but he had acquired both in a more honorable and in a very different manner from that by which General Conyngham had succeeded to his.

It had always been the hope of General Conyngham and his family, that Malcolm and Emily would be the means of uniting the fortunes and the political power of the two families. With this purpose in view, they had schemed and intrigued unceasingly. But her well-known preference for the society of young Hamilton had hitherto proven an insuperable bar to the family ambition ; and Miss Emory's appearance on the scene seemed to finally settle the matter.

The Charlton's were a very refined and cultured family, and for generations had been, with the Hamilton's, the leading people of Armour. The Conyngham's were a comparatively new growth, and unmistakably belonged to the aristocracy of the *parvenu*. As much as the latter upheld and prided themselves on the distinctions which wealth and official position conferred on them, and as much as they pretended to sneer at people of the high-bred old families, who could claim to have been descended from the three generations which Chesterfield said were necessary to make a gentleman, they secretly envied and hated them; and on meeting their social superiors in this respect, they generally — under a patronizing and indifferent manner — endeavored vainly to conceal the rankling sense of inferiority within.

When the daughters became old enough to understand how wealthy their father was, they had insisted on a liberal allowance; and like all people who in early life have been unaccustomed to power and luxury, they now rushed to extremes, and their insolent and impudent pretensions knew no bounds. While fawning on and flattering those whom they thought could contribute to their social position, they acted to the rest of the world in a manner which brought down upon them all the ridicule and contempt their silly and ridiculous conduct deserved. They dressed in the extreme of fashion, and, notwithstanding their dresses were elegant and exceedingly rich as to material, like all *nouveaux riches* they loved gay colors and *bizarre* ornaments, and were fond of diamonds.

As Hamilton passed through the hall, he met Mrs. Conyngham. The old lady, unlike the daughters, was delighted to see him; and after numerous inquiries as to his health and future prospects, insisted, in her plain,

frank way, on his dining with them. Hers was a heart unspoiled by success, and which had, in the hard school of early struggle and privation, learned to feel for and sympathise with others.

Pleading a prior engagement Larry declined, but accepted an invitation to accompany the girls to Secretary G—'s reception that evening.

A few minutes after 9 o'clock, Hamilton sent up his card, and the servant at once returned with the information that the young ladies had ordered their carriage early in the evening, in order to make a few calls before the reception, and, on their return from which, had waited for him until nine, but not appearing, they concluded he could not come, and had just driven away.

They were in their rooms when this message was sent down by Mary Conyngham, and their carriage was waiting for them outside.

Meeting Colonel Irving in the corridor of the hotel, and learning he was also going to the reception, and without company, Hamilton and he concluded to go together.

Entering the massive doorway of Secretary G—'s fine residence, they found the parlors hot, stifling, and thronged.

After going through the usual formality of hand-shaking with the host and hostess, Larry discovered his lady friends in the centre of the room gayly conversing with a stolid looking senator, and several fine looking generals. It was a mixed assembly, gathered from all parts of the country, and mostly composed of the flash element brought to the surface by the great war, which seemed to have revolutionised everything not only in political but in social life, and had completely swept away the old, and in some respects, better order of things.

Hamilton quietly approached the party, who had not

as yet perceived him, with a careless and pleasant good evening to the Misses Conyngham, while shaking hands with Emily. He was received with such freezing *hauteur* by the former, and in so pitifully embarrassing a manner by Emily, that he was stung to the quick. His pride was thoroughly aroused; and while outwardly cold and self-possessed, he at once naturally assumed that dignified and quiet gravity with which the gentleman always conceals his feelings when wronged.

After such a reception it was impossible to carry on a very pleasant conversation, and as soon as his pride and politeness would allow him to excuse himself, Hamilton rejoined Colonel Irving, who was surrounded by a bevy of ladies, engaged in an animated discussion concerning the doubtful advantages of the new over the old *régime*. Pleading indisposition to his friends, and bidding them good-night, he was about leaving the room, mortified and humiliated, when Irving introduced him to a very elegant-looking lady, Mrs. Renshaw. "Mrs. Renshaw," added the Colonel, "is an old friend of your mothers, and wishes to speak to you about her."

"Your striking resemblance to your mother led me to inquire of the Colonel your name; and I remembered it at once as the name of the gentlemen she had married. We have never met since we were at school together, and we little dreamed then that our acquaintance would be renewed through her son."

Larry could only murmur a few words as to his great pleasure in meeting one who regarded his mother so kindly; but, fortunately, Mrs. Renshaw was full of fond reminiscences, and while making room for him on the sofa beside her, she asked, "How does it come your mother is willing to part with you? Has she other sons at home?"

"Unfortunately, no. Indeed, it is a great grief to her that I persisted in my determination to enlist."

"What were your reasons for joining the army, Mr. Hamilton? I see you were not tempted by high rank, and not many of our young men, delicately brought up, are willing to look upon the private station as the post of honor."

"To discharge the duty I owe my country was one reason, and to explain my other reasons would be trespassing upon your time at such a place as this."

"Very well ; you must then come to see me at Willard's, where we are stopping at present — until some changes we are having made in our home on F street are completed. I am always in until noon, and shall be glad to hear of all that has transpired since last I saw your mother."

As others were claiming Mrs. Renshaw's attention, Larry bade her good evening, with feelings very different from those which had possessed him when about leaving the room before, although the bitterness and soreness still remained.

Mrs. Renshaw was the wife of one of our New England senators, whose hold upon the respect and affections of his constituents had been so great that they had returned him over and over again, until his term was really a life tenure.

Mrs. Renshaw was one of the very few ladies in Washington who, amidst the flattery and adulations which surrounded her as the wife of one of the most able, intellectual, and leading members of the Senate, and whose influence with the Administration was all-paramount, retained amidst all this intriguing and scheming life, all the graces of pure and refined home life ; and shone as

brilliantly in the social world as her husband did in the political one.

To be placed on the footing young Hamilton had thus secured, was to have the *entrée* of the best society in the capital; and the Misses Conyngham felt somewhat chagrined, and regretted their course towards him, on seeing the marked attention bestowed upon him by one of the leaders in society, and one with whom, in spite of all their efforts, they had never, as yet, succeeded in establishing themselves on more than the most formal footing.

As Larry passed out of the bright hall into the cold night air, and wrapped his cloak around him, the solitude of the deserted streets seemed grateful, and the cold night wind felt refreshing.

That Emily could have treated him so indifferently! He could scarcely realize it, as he sat in his room long after midnight, over a half-smoked cigar, busy brooding over the evening. He knew as far as the Conyngham girls were concerned, that it was his humble rank in the service which had caused his ungracious reception, and he fairly groaned while reproaching himself for putting it in the power of these upstarts to snub him.

Fanny Adair would never have acted in that way. Forty Misses Conyngham, with all Washington at their backs, he was sure would not have influenced her a hair's breadth. She would have been as true as the needle to the pole. No matter what apologies Emily might make in the future, nothing could ever restore the confidence he had once reposed in her affections — that was certain.

Poor Emily loved Larry more than she was fully aware of, and after he had left them she was miserable, and would have given anything to have undone the mischief.

CHAPTER XII.

REPUBLICS ARE UNGRATEFUL.

HAMILTON was also stopping at Willard's, which, at that time, was the most fashionable hostelry in the city. On entering the breakfast-room the next morning, he saw the Misses Conyngham and Emily smiling graciously. He bowed to them in the most dignified and formal manner. After ordering his breakfast, and while carelessly glancing over the morning paper, his attention was attracted to the conversation of two gentlemen opposite, one of whom was a noble-looking man with grey hair and a countenance which indicated a high order of intellect, and bore the air of one accustomed to wield power.

An almost sleepless night had left Larry nervous, and, notwithstanding he endeavored to interest himself in his papers, the deep low tones of the two strangers opposite sounded clear as a bell and compelled his attention.

"Yes," remarked the first speaker, "there have been several Cabinet meetings to discuss the matter, but the President is slow to suspect evil of those who have once gained his confidence. But these rumors have of late been flying so thick and fast, and some of them have been traced to such reliable sources, that Mr. Lincoln could no longer ignore them ; and hence these secret Cabinet meetings, which have been the cause of so much conjecture and of so many sensational stories."

"What do you think will be the result of them ?"

"I cannot say now, but in a few days the whole business will be exposed, and some persons will find themselves in trouble."

"It is the most disgraceful affair that has ever happened to the country," exclaimed the elder of the two, indignantly. "That any man occupying the high position of trust and honor that General Conyngham does, could so lower himself as to take advantage of the confidence reposed in him by Mr. Lincoln (the people never had any faith in either the man's honor or his patriotism), to enrich himself and his family at the expense of the government and the brave men in the field at a time like this, when they are periling their lives and protecting the very home of this unprincipled and sordid wretch, is almost beyond belief. The effect of such an example in high places will be ruinous and far-reaching, and will encourage thousands of lesser rogues to swindle the government. His punishment should be commensurate with the amount of mischief he has done."

"Did you *hear* any particular charge against him; that is, anything more than mere reports," asked the younger gentleman.

"Yes; he has surrounded himself with a *coterie* of vulgar men that a cabinet officer should be ashamed to associate with on any kind of terms, but whose society he prefers to that of men like Sumner, Chase, Seward, and Wilson; and these gentlemen have frequently been compelled to wait in the ante-room, while those worthies were busily engaged discussing and settling the details of some rascally contract. Arrangements have been entered into by Conyngham with his cronies to furnish the troops with miserable shoddy clothing at ruinous prices, while broken-down mules were sold to the transportation de-

partment, and worthless old horses furnished our cavalry at prices which would have given every man in that branch of the service a full-blooded Arabian. When the greed and rapacity of this crowd of vultures reached the point of trifling with the very lives of the troops, by tampering with the medical stores, it was the hair which broke the camel's back, and will likely cost him his official head, and probably send him home in the disgrace he so well merits."

"Instead of costing him his official head," indignantly replied the other, "it should cost him his natural head. Old King Frederick of Prussia's example was very effectual. You remember during the close of the seven year's war, when this class of men were ruining the country, the old King hung several of them, and that settled the business at once. This man ought to be made an example of, and neither his high official position, his wealth, or his political influence, should be permitted to save him; but, on the contrary, should be additional reasons for punishing him more severely."

"Was there any truth in the report that the last battle was lost through a delay in reinforcements arriving, owing to the want of transportation facilities, and the haggling over terms by the President of the short route to the capital, — a road which Conyngham has so cunningly secured the absolute control of, and which, through his son, he is now running in their own private interests, and to the great detriment and disadvantage of the government?"

"I do not know whether there is any truth in that report or not, but I do know that he controls that road absolutely, and that the manner in which he ousted its president, and secured the stock necessary to control it, was one of the most shameful and disgracefully dishonest

transactions that has ever stained any public man's career. The Conyngham's have the government by the throat here, and they are not the men to let loose unless they receive unusually hard knocks. He is already gorged with public plunder; but his insatiate greed knows no bounds."

"I hope," replied his friend, "that Mr. Lincoln will have the firmness to resist the pressure that may be brought to bear in his favor by his paid political harpies."

"Have no fears on that score. When Mr. Lincoln has conclusive proofs of the guilt of any party, no matter how high their position or what influence they may bring to bear, he will act promptly and fearlessly."

Overhearing — unavoidably — the name of Conyngham several times, and judging from the fact that he had heard the day before some rumors connecting General Conyngham with some questionable transactions, Hamilton was more than confirmed in the belief that some impending disgrace was hanging over the Conyngham family, and while thinking over his reception the evening before by the Conyngham girls, he could not repress a feeling of satisfaction.

As he walked into the parlor after finishing his breakfast, Emily advanced and greeted him in her old affectionate manner. While cool and dignified, his feelings were more of pity than of anger for the miserable weakness she had displayed. He was very badly disappointed in her, — and to be disappointed in those we love expresses more pain than the mere words indicate.

After a pleasant call on Mrs. Renshaw, in whose parlors he met some very pleasant and distinguished people, he returned to camp in a much better frame of mind than he had anticipated.

The next day, the leading oracle of the party announced,

in large head lines, that General Conyngham, had resigned the portfolio of war to act as minister to Berlin, on account of delicate health. "We understand," the article continued, "that the General's health has been sadly impaired by too close application to the arduous duties pertaining to his department, and to which he has given his undivided time and attention. The General will be sadly missed in the councils of the nation, where his large experience in men and affairs, his wise and statesman-like views on momentous and intricate questions of governmental policy, and his pure patriotism will make a void which will be very difficult for Mr. Lincoln to fill satisfactorily to himself and the people.

"The soldiers in the field will lose their best friend, and the country will deeply regret the loss of his distinguished service. His acceptance of the Berlin mission, will in some degree compensate the people for the loss of his invaluable services in the department he has just resigned, and in a measure, reconciles us to the change. That so able a man should represent us at one of the most haughty and aristocratic courts of the *effete* monarchies in the old world, is a matter of congratulation to the people. He will prove a noble representative of our great and free institutions, and one of whom every American citizen may well be proud. Since the days of Benjamin Franklin, John Jay, and Thomas Jefferson, we have had no representatives to foreign courts who could compare with him in any respect. He is truly a chevalier '*sans peur, sans reproche*,' in the literal sense of the words."

Mr. Lincoln would have disgraced him in the way Conyngham deserved to be, but the leaders of the party and the politicians declared it would ruin the republican

party ; and this Judas Iscariot, instead of going out and hanging himself, went to Berlin on a bed of roses, amidst the paid plaudits of the organs of the party, and the enthusiastic and tearful farewells of all the rich mule contractors, and political harpies and leeches in the party.

CHAPTER XIII.

REAPING THE WHIRLWIND.

MALCOLM CONYNGHAM visited the Emory's quite frequently during the winter. As the affianced husband of her daughter, he was of course a privileged and welcome guest. Not only did Mrs. Emory and Lou enjoy his visits, but so, also, did Fannie Adair. For once in his life-time, Malcolm opened wide his purse strings. He justified his expenditures on the same principle that a gambler stakes a small sum in order to win a large one.

Of course Fannie delighted in the little suppers at Delmonico's, the operas, and fully appreciated the advantages of a *distingué* looking escort to balls and parties,—knowing and fully enjoying the fact, of which she was fully aware, that Malcolm not only begrudged every extra cent spent, but, at the same time, looked upon her as a nuisance, but one unavoidable for the time being, and which he had to make the best of.

Mrs. Emory was exceedingly gracious, and, in order to impress her prospective son-in-law, was more lavish than ever in her expenditures. She gave the most costly and elaborate entertainments during his visits to the city; and had Conyngham been less shrewd, this display, and the class of people he met with at Mrs. Emory's, would have removed all doubts concerning their great wealth. But naturally wary and suspicious in an important affair like this, he left no stone unturned to ascertain their exact

financial status, and was indefatigable in securing interviews with those persons who would most likely be properly informed on the subject. Having secured a letter of introduction to one of Mr. Emory's former partners, he had in some measure learned from that gentleman of the shrinkage in Mr. Emory's fortune through his Southern investments; but he had as yet no idea as to the full extent of their losses.

Conyngham's attentions had been apparently so sincere, and marked of late by so much tenderness, that Lou Emory, foolish girl! flattered herself with the erroneous idea, that even if the crash in their affairs should overtake them before their marriage, he would still remain true to his vows, and to her. With all her worldly shrewdness, she little knew or understood the thoroughly mercenary character of her lover.

The latter loved her as much as he could love any one, yet he would not have hesitated for a single instant to have cast her ruthlessly aside if certain she would not advance his worldly prospects.

Arriving in the city rather unexpectedly one morning, and feeling cramped and fatigued after his night's ride, he concluded to walk up town after eating his breakfast, instead of taking a *coupé*, as was his custom when calling on the Emorys. He made his appearance unexpectedly and quite early for a caller. The servant ushered him into the parlor, and left to announce his arrival to the ladies.

The doors between the two rooms being slightly ajar, he inadvertently became an attentive listener to a conversation, carried on in low tones, between Mrs. Emory and a gentleman he judged, from the several remarks overheard, to be the lady's attorney. At first he could scarcely distinguish more than a few sentences, but as he gradually

became accustomed to their voices, by listening attentively and moving his chair closer to the door, soon heard enough to convince him that his marriage with Miss Emory would be neither advantageous or desirable. He resolved at once, without a moment's hesitation, that all matrimonial speculations with him, at least as far as Miss Emory was concerned, were at an end forever.

As he leaned forward, contemptibly straining every nerve to overhear the conversation, he heard Mrs. Emory remark, "His father is reputed to be worth millions, Mr. Evans."

The sad and subdued tones in which this remark was made, sounded very unlike the usual haughty and imperious tones of the proud Mrs. Emory.

"That may all be true, and his son may be engaged to your daughter; but "there are many slips 'twixt the cup and the lip," if you will pardon me for this old, but trite saying. I advise your daughter to hasten the affair as much as possible, as your creditors are growing restless, and becoming importunate of late. Indeed, I cannot possibly see how in the world I can keep things moving much longer. You are fully aware, my dear Mrs. Emory, that the responsibility of this unhappy state of affairs rests entirely upon yourself; and while I do not wish to reproach you, you know how often I expostulated and plead with you and foretold just how this miserable business would likely end. If you had taken my advice and removed to the suburbs with the means you possessed several years ago, you could have to-day been living in comfort and comparative good style, instead of being placed in the false and humiliating position in which you now find yourself."

"My daughter informed me that they would certainly be married in May, and you can keep our affairs intact

until after that time, can you not? Our finances are surely not in quite so desperate a condition as that?"

"I cannot promise you with any certainty. I will, however, do all in my power to help you in your troubles; and I assure you, Mrs. Emory, that no one can be more sincerely sorry than I am to be the conveyer to you of such disagreeable news. That I have conscientiously endeavored to perform my duties, as Mr. Emory's executor and your attorney, and that it has been through no fault of mine that the estate has become so badly involved I think you will admit. Hoping you may succeed in extricating yourself from your difficulties, and all may come out right yet, I bid you good-morning."

The door closed, and as the gentleman passed through the hall, Conyngham heard the rustle of Mrs. Emory's dress as, with a deep sigh, she wearily ascended the staircase, evidently too busily pre-occupied with her own perplexed and sad thoughts to notice him, as he sat in a dark corner of the room.

He had scarcely time to assume an indifferent air, when Lou, bright and radiant, flashed with glad surprise into the parlor, and greeted him with unusual warmth for one naturally so undemonstrative.

Conyngham, when necessary, could be an accomplished dissembler. As Lou sat beside her lover she little dreamed of the unfortunate turn her affairs had just taken:

"How is Fannie getting along?" he asked in an unconcerned and matter-of fact way, while placing one arm over the back of the sofa, and, at the same time, half turning towards her, and taking her hand in his own in the most lover-like and natural manner possible.

"She is very well, but a little tired, as we were up quite late last night at a party, and neither feel very bright this

morning. But the moment I heard you were here, I forgot all about being tired. What a difference circumstances make in one's feelings, — don't they ? ” she asked looking lovingly into his face.

“ Well, yes ; circumstances do affect one's feelings sometimes, considerably,” he dryly remarked, while endeavoring to prevent his chagrin and disappointment from betraying itself in his voice and manner ; but for once, and in spite of his utmost efforts, there was that in his tone and manner which, with the swift intuition of love, alarmed the young girl ; and she showed it very plainly. Conyngham endeavored, by increased demonstration and the most assiduous attentions, to remove any suspicions she might have entertained as to his sincerity, and naturally, as might have been expected, only increased her suspicions, and made her miserable.

“ Malcolm, would you love me all the same if you had found me a poor, friendless girl ? ” she asked almost pitifully, and with humid eyes, while looking wistfully up into his cold face, and waiting his reply with an anguished look that ought to have melted a heart of coarser texture than his own.

He met her gaze unflinchingly, and declared repeatedly that nothing in the world could ever change his feelings towards her, and scouted the very idea, while indignantly chiding her for her want of faith in him.

Adept as he was in the art of deception, he could not have maintained much longer this insincere course ; and fortunately for him, Fannie Adair entered very opportunely, and relieved him.

Radiant and fresh as a rose, Conyngham could not but compliment her on her fine appearance. But compliments or attentions from Malcolm Conyngham never flattered

Fannie Adair. Her true, sincere, and straightforward nature despised duplicity, and always recoiled instinctively from his advances. With her naturally quick perceptions she had always suspected Conyngham's insincerity, and had estimated his sordid and selfish nature correctly; and while always treating him with marked politeness, it was with a reserved and cautious manner that never failed to nettle and puzzle him as to her real feelings towards him. That she did not like him he was fully aware; and why she did not he could never understand, as he could not remember of ever having given her any reasons to justify her feelings towards him.

As the three sat in Delmonico's that night, sipping their wine, on their return from the theatre where they had witnessed the play of "School for Scandal," Fannie looked up, in the most innocent manner, and remarked, while watching him closely, "Mr. Conyngham, do you know you remind me very much of Joseph Surface?"

"You are inclined to be rather sarcastic to-night," Conyngham remarked, hotly, at the same time flushing scarlet, and in his confusion and irritation overturning his glass and spilling his wine.

"Oh, I intended to be complimentary, I assure you," she continued in a slightly taunting manner. "I admire his shrewdness and talent for getting along in the world. If Joseph were living now he would be a great man in this country. Just now such men are in great demand. The people delight in honoring them. The Charleses are no longer admired, with their chivalrous and worn-out old-time notions of gallantry and contempt for the thrifty ways of our generation. If Sheridan were living to-day, and wrote that play as typical of the times, he would have made Joseph and not Charles the hero,

and would have given him a high cabinet position, and made him the confidential adviser of the president.

Like most ladies, Fannie had not made it a duty to read the morning paper regularly, or she would not have made the remark.

But Conyngham, always suspicious, gave her full credit for intending it in the wrong way.

The fact of her friend having made her that afternoon aware of their pecuniary troubles, and Lou's misery, with Conyngham's distraught manner, had irritated her; and while no doubt impressed, in her own mind, as to the similarity of Conyngham's and Joseph's characters, she had made the remark in such a light, bantering way, that she never dreamed for a moment of its giving him offence. There was very little conversation afterwards, and the party were not very lively as they drove home.

Fannie returned to Armour in the early part of Lent; and in two weeks after her departure the crash came, notwithstanding Mr. Evans' almost superhuman efforts to avert it until after Lou's marriage with Conyngham. Mrs. Emory and her daughter shortly after removed to a small town in Connecticut, within a few hour's ride of the city, where they lived very comfortably on the sum Mrs. Emory had set aside for such a possible contingency, and which sum, with still more inconsistency, she had never drawn upon during all her troubles and embarrassment. Compared with their former luxurious mode of living, and lavish and extravagant style, they lived plainly.

The wedding was postponed indefinitely, and Conyngham, much to the surprise of Fannie Adair and others in Armour, who knew so well his calculating and mercenary nature, still continued to visit the Emory's regularly; and he did not break the engagement for some time after their troubles.

CHAPTER XIV.

TWO PATRIOTS.

THE spring had flown by rapidly and it was now mid-summer. Nothing had occurred in the town of Armour to disturb the even tenor of its ways but accounts of great battles, and the excitement now grown common and incident to the organizing and recruiting of troops.

Malcolm Conyngham had been his father's *factotum* in all the large contracts which had disgraced the latter's reign in his department, and the head and front of the many dubious business enterprises which had finally necessitated the general's summary removal and trip to Europe at government expense. In addition to being the head of his father's banking interests, he was now also engaged in operating and controlling the short route to the capital for the sole benefit of the Conyngham family, and to the great detriment of the public treasury. Malcolm was not slow to avail himself of these great advantages, and dictated his own terms to the hard-pressed government, and wrung money out of it at every turn. "Not that he loved his country less, but he loved Malcolm Conyngham more." He was thus thoroughly but safely patriotic, and while young Hamilton, and thousands of others as delicately and tenderly reared as himself, and to whom life was just as sweet, were bravely facing the foe in defence of his and their homes, young and strong, this patriotic young man remained securely in the rear, — busy like the Jew sutlers

who follow armies — taking advantage of the necessities of the troops, and the government, and the people, to amass wealth and lay the foundations of his immense fortune.

As he sits in his bank parlor, busily engaged taking an inventory of his bonds and stocks, this lovely summer day, what a contrast his life presents to that of his friend Hamilton, who is at this very time in the thickest of the bloody fray at Cedar Mountain — a battle which, while not very decisive for either side in its results, and of short duration, was scarcely equaled during the war for fierce fighting and terrible fatality.

For some time Larry had been endeavoring to procure a short leave of absence. He received one, but not in the manner he expected. His promotion had been rapid.

Stonewall Jackson, flushed with victory from the Peninsular campaign and with Richmond relieved from all danger, now swept towards the Potomac, and hurling his forces across the Rapidan, hastened with the desperate energy he had now become famous for, to gain the strong position of Cedar Mountain before General Banks, who was likewise straining every nerve to anticipate him. Every foot of ground had been stubbornly contested on the Federal side by Bayard's cavalry, but Jackson succeeded in forcing our troops back, and entrenching himself on the mountain sides, after masking his batteries in the dense foliage, impatiently awaited the coming of the foe.

It was the 9th of August, and the day was hot and sweltering, the heat intense and fairly stifling, the mountain sides were covered with lurid green, and the dense foliage effectually concealed the number of Jackson's forces.

Hamilton's regiment was under Bayard's command, and had had more than their share of weary marches and

constant skirmishes while endeavoring to check Jackson's advance. When the 2d corps, under Banks, made its appearance, about four o'clock in the afternoon, they were in the midst of a hot skirmish; both horses and men were almost worn out, and felt glad when relieved and ordered to support a battery, on the brow of the hill near by that descended into a corn-field, and beyond which, on the hill-side, at the edge of a thick woods, were placed the enemy's batteries, and where numbers of their sharpshooters had concealed themselves amongst the branches of trees for the purpose of picking off our officers.

As Larry sat on his horse, from this elevation, he had a fine view of the field; now and then some general officer would ride to the edge of the hill, and placing his field-glass to his eyes, would look long and earnestly towards the frowning woods. Several flashes, accompanied by puffs of white smoke, suddenly burst forth from the wooded hillside, and in a few seconds a solid shot and a shell or two flew over their heads.

The federal guns replied, and the artillery on both sides began to fire rapidly. Whole batteries were let off, and shell after shell went screaming over their heads, lower and lower every minute, as they gradually succeeded in getting the range. As Hamilton sat quietly watching the enemy, he suddenly heard an explosion that seemed to pierce his very brain, and looking around quickly a sickening sight, and one he never forgot, met his eye. In a cloud of smoke and dust were flying legs and arms, while lying around in a heap were several men and horses literally covered with blood. A cavalryman threw his hands wildly above his head, and horse and rider fell to the ground at the same moment, quivering convulsively, and then lay still — dead.

Here a man would suddenly start, drop off his horse with a loud groan, while another would spring clear out of his saddle into the air, uttering a piercing shriek, and fall backward, quivering, lifeless, with his eyes staring vacantly, his teeth set, and hands aimlessly clutching the air.

An artillery sergeant, sighting one of the pieces in front of him, particularly attracted Hamilton's attention by his magnificent physique and brisk soldiery movements. He could but admire him even in this dangerous moment. Stepping back, he threw up his hand as a signal to fire. Convulsively clasping his hand to his breast, he stood for a moment, staggered, reeled, and fell to the ground, gasping for breath, while the hot life-blood poured from his breast. Only the mad excitement of battle prevented Larry from growing sick at the sight.

The sturdy cannoneers stood bravely by their guns. Stripped to the waist, blackened with powder, they continued their work of carnage and death. The heavy projectiles from the rebel batteries filled the air, and flew bursting overhead and around them, knocking horses and men over every few minutes.

The federal artillery gradually slackened their fire ; and there was a lull in the storm of battle. Such a silence is always ominous at such a time, and indicative of some important movement about to take place. It generally precedes a charge.

Suddenly the earth shook, the hill seemed to fairly start from its very foundation, all the guns on both sides appeared to have been discharged at the same moment. The battle had now commenced in earnest. Hamilton and his men cursed the blunder that had exposed them to this merciless fire, without their being apparently a par-

ticle of use, and were kept busy in twisting and dodging the shells which were exploding and bursting into fragments every second — now in front, now in the rear, and frequently it seemed right in their faces. They followed each other so rapidly, that it was one constant, prolonged, whizzing, shrieking, and screaming.

Solid shot came madly rushing along, now flying a few feet over their heads, now striking the hill-side with a dull crash, and ricocheting a hundred feet into the air, and falling far into their rear.

Banks, still unsuspecting the number opposed to him, had determined to charge the enemy, and formed his men, in full view of the foe. "Forward!" rang along the line, and, with a ringing cheer, colors flying, and bayonets glittering in the bright sunlight in beautiful order, the serried columns swept onward through the cornfield, toward the rebel batteries which fairly desolated the field. The roar of these guns was awful; and at every discharge the earth seemed to tremble under the shock. The scene and the moment was grand and terrible; and the angels of death were busy bearing the souls of men into eternity. But the brave fellows closed up the horrid gaps in their ranks, and pressed forward into the very jaws of death. The battle was raging in earnest. The maddening rattle of the musketry pierced the ear, and the thunder of the artillery caused air and earth to vibrate; while the dense clouds of dust and smoke, that rose from the battle-field, completely enveloped the infantry, and concealed them from view.

The musketry fire increased, while the artillery on both sides slackened their fire for fear of killing their own men.

At this moment, a shout arose above the wild din of battle; and Hamilton, turning to one of his brother offi-

cers, triumphantly exclaimed, "Our fellows are giving it to them now!"

"I don't like that cheer. That is not a Northern cheer," replied his friend, as a solid shot went crashing through an ambulance, within a few feet of them, which was on its way from the battle-field with its load of suffering humanity.

Our men now began to fall back. They had unexpectedly come upon dense masses of the enemy, who had been lying concealed at the base of a little swell in the field beyond, and rising to their feet, with the most savage yells, poured into the faces of their unsuspecting foe a tempest of fire which no mortal could withstand.

Men staggered from the field mangled and torn, or slowly limped back, while others, more seriously wounded, crawled off the field a few inches at a time, or were borne back by their comrades on stretchers, groaning in mortal agony.

The confederates seeing our men waver, renewed their fire with redoubled fury. Our whole line gave way. Some, seized with panic, hurried off the field; but, considering the dreadful carnage, the men fell back in good order.

The battle occupied only a little over an hour, and as the exhausted infantry slowly retired back of the artillery to reform their thinned out ranks, the enemy began to show themselves at the edge of the woods, evidently intent on charging and capturing the battery in front of Hamilton; the guns of which, being loaded with grape and canister, at once opened fire upon the foe. Just then an orderly, covered with dust and his horse white with foam, dashed up to Colonel Irving, and after exchanging a few hurried words, rode rapidly off to another part of the field.

Colonel Irving slowly walked his horse up to Hamilton, and in a low tone, ordered him to form his battalion in front of the battery, and charge the enemy at once.

Their turn had come at last. Hamilton formed his men as directed; and after proudly glancing along the line, he rose in his stirrups, and looked earnestly over the field. But the dense cloud of smoke which hung like a pall over the scene, obscured from view everything but the flashing of the enemy's guns. For a few moments the artillery of the enemy ceased firing, and a little bird, frightened from the woods, alighted on a tree near by, and began to pour forth its evening hymn.

Hamilton afterwards said that even at this terrible moment the incongruity of the thing attracted his attention.

The horrible uproar again commenced, as the bugles, loud and ringing, sounded the charge. "Ready men! Forward!" shouted Hamilton in clear trumpet tones; and with teeth firmly set, eyes flashing with the fierce excitement of battle, legs closely pressing their horses sides, and with drawn sabres, they plunged madly down the hillside, leaving in their rear a dense cloud of dust, as they swept like a whirlwind over the field, and with a wild yell disappeared in the smoke which covered the enemy.

"Onward they boldly rode and well."

They flung themselves like a thunderbolt against the masses of the enemy, dealing death and destruction on every side.

But the overwhelming numbers compelled them to retreat; and leaving half their number on the field, the rest whirled and galloped wildly to the right, and cutting their way back again, dashed past the battery they had left but a short time before, so proud and confident. Some, una-

ble to check the headlong speed of their horses, were carried far into the rear amongst the infantry. It was a desperate charge, and considering the small number engaged, a fearful slaughter ; but it accomplished the purpose for which it was intended, and checked the attempt of the enemy to charge the battery.

As Hamilton, with the remnant of his command wheeled to the right, and swept like lightning through the ranks of the enemy, he felt a sharp, burning sensation in his shoulder ; and for a few minutes afterwards scarcely remembered anything but of his horse stumbling, and finally sinking under him. The poor animal was shot through and through ; and Hamilton, quickly disengaging himself, hurried away, but, unable to resist, he turned for a moment to look at his dying steed, which, with an expression almost human in its supplication and agony, looked after its master, and gently whinnied.

The piteous appeal of the dying animal was too much for the kind heart of Hamilton, who, notwithstanding the storm of grape and canister which filled the air, hurried back, and pulling his pistol from the holster, quickly ended its misery.

Making his way, wounded and on foot, to the top of the hill, where stood the battery which they had been supporting, he was so weakened by loss of blood as to be compelled to take an ambulance ; and during the retreat up the Valley, and until they arrived at Washington, he suffered frightfully from his wound, which was a serious one, and slow in healing.

Receiving a furlough on account of it he returned to Armour, where he had been reported as killed.

When he alighted from the cars, pale and wan looking, he was joyously received by his townsmen with all the

honors of a hero. Larry had always been popular, especially with the poorer people and the laboring men. Raised amongst them from boyhood, unlike Conyngham, he had a kind word and a pleasant smile for all, and knew no distinctions amongst men but those of honesty, geniality, and manliness. As boy or man he had always been the same whole-souled and genial companion. No one had ever known him to take advantage of his social position to make others uncomfortable, while Conyngham availed himself of every opportunity that presented to make himself disagreeable by his rudeness, arrogance, and self-assertion. It could be truly said that Hamilton was as universally liked as Conyngham was disliked by every one in the community.

During the period he remained at home, his time was pleasantly spent in the company of Emily Charlton and Fannie Adair, and when he returned to his regiment, truth compels the admission that Emily had nearly succeeded in obliterating the memory of the unfortunate affair of the reception, and had also proven to him more fascinating than ever; and in his *châteaux en Espagne*, after the war, Emily always figured conspicuously.

CHAPTER XV.

WHICH WILL IT BE ?

THE great rebellion was over and peace again reigned supreme throughout the land.

Hamilton had returned home with a hard-earned eagle upon his shoulder, which he wore with becoming modesty, and, at the same time, with the proud consciousness that it had been won, not by political or family influence, but by rough riding and hard fighting. Believing that he deserved a rest after three long years of hardship and privation, and especially as his wound gave him considerable trouble of late, he concluded for a time to take the world easy.

That he could long remain idle was simply out of the question. To an active temperament like Hamilton's, nothing could be more irksome than inaction. For a year he spent his time in fugitive literary efforts, which, while not proving very remunerative in a pecuniary sense, made him some reputation as a ready and fluent writer, and proved invaluable as a means of entertaining himself during long hours that might have been worse employed.

On the most intimate footing with both Emily Charlton and Fannie Adair, he so delicately divided his attentions between the two that even the village gossips for once were at sea.

While Emily had all the advantages of a prior and older affection, the Washington affair had not been

entirely forgotten, and the last few years had made Hamilton more reflective and thoughtful ; he now read Emily's shallow nature correctly. Before, he had been too young and too enamoured to doubt the sincerity and depth of the affection her manner professed for him. To his inexperienced eyes then she was all that she affected to be to him. He knew now she was simply flattered by his passion for her, and it was evident to him that it had been returned more out of vanity than real affection. And as she matured her little vanities developed into actual silliness, the scales had fallen from his mental vision, and the hallucination was over. He now saw her as she really was — a woman utterly destitute of earnest convictions ; and while she possessed quick instinct in detecting the weakness of those around her, she had very little real intellect, but could, with the greatest facility, adopt any opinion, sentiment, or manner that would fit those whom she desired to please. She was all things to all men ; she flattered everybody, and agreed with every one, while caring for none beyond the gratification of her vanity. Intensely egotistic, she was also weak and vacillating, and with no force of character whatever. Self was her only consideration. By her vanity she lived. She could not bear to be thought ill of by any person, no matter by whom ; it tortured her. Hence, the pliancy with which she suited herself to everybody's way of thinking.

Fanny Adair's bright and cheerful ways, wonderful tact, and good sense had won greatly upon him since his return home. She was now his confidant in everything. Fanny possessed what Larry lacked — an even, cheerful, and happy disposition under any and all circumstances, and a deeply well-grounded belief and faith in the

religious principles of her parents, which were of the strictest Calvinistic school. She believed in living up to, and practicing, its teachings in her every day life, at all times, and was never content with the thin veneering of Christianity so fashionable amongst modern Christians, and which makes its appearance regularly every Sabbath morning, and culminates with a grand dress parade after church.

At this stage of affairs, Conyngham appeared upon the scene as a suitor for Emily's hand. Since the breaking off of his engagement with Miss Emory he had completely absorbed himself in making money, and, under his father's instructions and tuition, he had of late begun to try his hand in politics.

Judge Charlton's (Emily's father) influence politically, throughout the state, was second only to that of General Conyngham, and as we have mentioned before, it was the great desire of the Conyngham's to see an alliance between the two families through Malcolm and Emily, and thus to form a political and social combination that would make its influence felt even in national affairs.

Judge and Mrs. Charlton were both anxious to have him for a son-in-law, and the only question which perplexed Malcolm was how to dispose of Hamilton, as he felt morally certain that Emily's affections to a great extent were already engaged. But his scheming brain and determined will soon found a way to remove all obstacles.

He at once proceeded to pay the most marked attention to her, and with his usual shrewdness, and knowledge of the secret springs which influence human nature, he began to insidiously play upon Emily's quick pride and vain nature. He was entirely mistaken in regard to Larry's real feelings towards Emily, and thought him deeply in

love with her, but had no fears but that some scheme would suggest itself, by which he could rid himself of the only remaining barrier to his matrimonial ambition.

But Conyngham had exaggerated Hamilton's attentions to Emily. While the latter was apparently as attentive to one as the other of the young ladies, he was in reality completely enamored of Fannie. The last few years, she had bloomed into a beautiful woman, and was as fascinating as beautiful. Although Hamilton had a Sybarite's love of beauty in a woman, yet his fastidious taste required a combination of intellect and society culture as well, and Fannie Adair not only united all these charms and graceful qualities, but she was also a woman of fixed principles and thoroughly conscientious.

It had seemed but natural for Fannie from childhood to look upon Larry Hamilton as her *beau ideal* of all that was refined and chivalrous, as it was for her to breathe the air around her. Yet at times when her mother ventured to remonstrate with her, and referred to Larry's former irregularities and his apparent indisposition to settle down to some steady pursuit like other young men, as indicative of a disposition which would soon find the restraints of domestic life irksome, and likely to make unhappy the woman he married, she could not deny to herself that her mother had good reasons for thinking so, and admitted that her mother's thoughts were true reflections of her own.

No sadder or more solemn consideration, nor one more pregnant with joy or misery, presents itself to the mind of a thoughtful woman, than when she reasons within herself the momentous questions, — will this man drag me down to his, or can I bring him up to my, moral level?

But the time for hesitation had long since passed. They were now absolutely necessary to one another's happiness.

Emily, piqued, mortified, and wounded, at Hamilton's attention to Fannie, encouraged Conyngham's suit ; and while his attentions at first were distasteful to her, the prospect of a wealthy establishment dazzled and reconciled her to the prospective alliance. Her manner towards him soon set at rest all Conyngham's fears as to final results. But his jealous and suspicious nature still feared Hamilton's possible interference.

Returning home from the war with the reputation of a brave and gallant officer, who had fought his way up from the ranks by his own unaided gallantry, both handsome and winning, Lawrence Hamilton had received enough attention from the fair sex to have turned the heads of most young men ; and even Malcolm Conyngham, much to the chagrin of that gentleman, was obliged for some time after Larry's return to occupy a secondary position in society.

CHAPTER XVI.

MY QUEEN.

WHILE conversing with his friend Conyngham one evening, Hamilton casually referred to the provision in his father's will, under which it would be necessary for him to engage in some business pursuit before he could claim a large sum devised to him, upon that condition, at a certain age; and Conyngham, all intent on getting his supposed rival in Emily's affection out of the way, at once suggested his taking a position on the road he was operating, and which, he remarked, though it might not prove either very congenial or lucrative, was the best thing he could do for the present, and would enable him to claim this advance from his father's estate.

Hamilton gladly accepted the position, and shortly after left for Hazleton, an important transferring station on Conyngham's road, and for the time being became a railroad official, although in a rather subordinate position.

His duties here threw him almost entirely amongst the laboring men and the hard-working employees, but also gave him unusual facilities for learning the ways, and studying the actions of the higher officials. Being naturally quick and observing, he soon became thoroughly conversant with the hardships and privations of the one class, and the greed and tyranny of the other, and the unscrupulous means by which they enriched themselves at the expense of the public, by special freight rates, rebates, draw-

backs, secret contracts with shippers, and the discriminations and preferences by which they prey and flourish upon local traffic, to the disadvantage of the people and business interests along their lines.

Hamilton's absence from Armour convinced him of the fact, that without the society of Fannie Adair life was not only insipid, but well nigh unendurable; and he looked forward to going home on Saturday with the impatience that only lovers can fully appreciate and understand.

"Two letters for you, Mr. Hamilton, and both in ladies' handwriting. How fortunate you are," laughed his assistant, pleasantly, one beautiful morning in May, as he handed him the delicately perfumed missives.

Larry's heart beat rapidly, and a faint flush overspread his manly countenance for a moment, as he recognized on one of them Fannie's delicate chirography.

Opening it nervously, he found therein an invitation to attend a party in the woods on the following day.

As it was lovely May weather, and business was slack, he concluded to accept it.

Opening the other, he could not repress an exclamation of surprise as he read the following:—

"Judge and Mrs. Mary N. Charlton request the honor of your presence at the marriage of their daughter Emily to Malcolm Conyngham, Esq., on Wednesday Evening, June 20th, at 7 o'clock, at the Clinton Avenue Presbyterian Church."

That evening he left for Armour, and the next morning called early on Fanny, in order to engage her for the day's pleasure. After ringing the door-bell several times and receiving no answer, he passed unannounced through the hall and into the parlor. As he entered the room, a frown,

as black as night, gathered on his brow, as he saw Fannie standing near the fire-place, with her upturned face smiling sweetly into that of a tall, handsome stranger, who stood with one arm caressingly thrown around her slender waist.

In that moment he fully realized the great depths of his love for her, and also realized fully that for him to lose this woman was to lose all hope and courage with which to fight the battle of life.

A sharp sword seemed to pierce his heart as Fannie quickly turned toward him with a bright smile. But his misery suddenly changed into joy, on recognizing Ralph Adair's manly countenance and frank hearty greeting. Ralph had completed his law course under Littlejohn, and had, during the last year, been travelling through Europe, before finally settling down to practice.

Ralph and Larry had always been the best of friends, and their meeting was cordial.

The day of the expedition to the woods was delightful, and after a pleasant afternoon, during which all the lovers in the party, as if moved by some irresistible attraction, wandered off together in couples by themselves.

Larry and Fannie strolled off on the hillside, where alone amidst the green woods and with the blue heavens above, he thought to himself, "This is my golden opportunity ; now or never." But his heart failed him at every attempt to broach the subject nearest his heart ; and Fannie, with that inexplicable timidity, and the strange perversity which invariably takes possession of a woman when she instinctively feels the critical moment approaching, not only refused to assist him in his embarrassment, but, by some light and laughing remark and provoking badinage,

seemed determined to prevent the conversation from drifting into a dangerous channel.

The brave and dashing young ex-colonel of cavalry who had faced death on the battle-field in the most horrible form, now sat by this young girl blushing and stammering like a simpering school girl.

At last, in sheer desperation he blurted out, in the most unsentimental manner possible, the direct matter-of-fact question, "Fannie, will you marry me?"

As her beautiful countenance flushed crimson with the roseate hue of love, and, speechless from unutterable emotion, they gazed into each others eyes, it required no words to convey to the enraptured lover her answer. As he finished speaking she was clasped in his ardent embrace.

While pleading eloquently of his loneliness away from her, Larry insisted on naming an early day for their wedding. But Fannie was firm in her determination to wait until they were certain their attachment was not a mere passing passion.

Hamilton's early reputation as a fickle lover, and his affair with Emily Charlton had given him a reputation for inconstancy that he was far from deserving, and owing to these circumstances he could not reflect upon Fannie for her desire to allow time to test the strength and sincerity of their attachment.

As they rejoined their companions Larry was in fine spirits. The party appeared suddenly to have new pleasures for him. A magician's wand seemed to have suddenly opened to him a world of enchantment. Life was a delicious dream. Everything was transformed, and he returned to his duties with a light heart and a bounding hope, while his future seemed spread before him like a sweet vision of Paradise. He could think of nothing but

Fannie Adair. Night and day, she was his all-absorbing thought. He trembled at the very intensity of his own feelings, while shuddering at the bare possibility of losing her. It was not mere passion of the senses, but an absorbing love based on the solid foundation of mutual respect and friendship, a similarity of tastes and aspirations, and intellectual companionship.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE CORMORANT CORPORATION.

THE Hon. John Littlejohn had, as trustee of the Hamilton estate, secured an influence over the president of the leading railroad running throughout the State, which at once opened to him a rare opportunity of acquiring political power and influence, from the fact that this official had, in a great measure, been the architect of Roger Hamilton's fortune. When the financial crash of 1857 came, he was embarrassed, and on the verge of bankruptcy, when Roger, unlike most men, generously placed his fortune at the disposal of his benefactor, by which timely aid he succeeded in weathering the storm.

During his lifetime Roger never collected this loan, and it still remained in the list of securities held in trust by Littlejohn for Larry's benefit. The former was not slow in availing himself of such an advantage to hoist himself into power and influence.

He became the attorney of the company, and succeeded in impressing the leading railroad official with the idea that he was a man of unexceptionable ability and integrity. In public life he had so far skilfully held himself aloof from the corrupting influences and practices which had made the name of Conyngham and politician, at this time and afterward, synonymous with scheming rascality. He had also proven his patriotism during the war, by unselfishly placing both his time and talents at the disposal

of his country in her hour of peril; and while not actually taking a part in the field, as an orator he had been invaluable in urging on braver men to fill the deadly breach.

The corporation he represented had extended its power all over the state, and, vampire like, had drained dry every channel of trade within its influence, compelling every citizen in the state to pay "tribute to Cæsar," and divided with the Conynghams the ownership and control of the legislature and the State government. Together, these cormorants had joined hands and preyed on the people, and, by bribing some and electing other members of the legislature, had succeeded in having such laws enacted as gave them unlimited power, and complete control over all other business interests, and in repealing all wise and restraining laws that were obnoxious to, or in any way discriminated against, their interests.

The people were now completely at the mercy of this gigantic monopoly and its friends and henchmen, the Conynghams. Not only had it secured control of the legislature and executive branches of the government, but the same means had been successfully wielded in capturing and controlling the judiciary of the state to such an extent as to secure all of the most important decisions in its favor, thus leaving the people without recourse, and completely prostrated before its power; and in all but name was as autocratic and tyrannical in the exercise of its ill-gotten power as is the Czar of all the Russias.

In defiance of the express provision of their charter, and through the means already referred to, the leading officials had acquired immense wealth; and in answer to the indignant protest of a long-suffering people, sneeringly asked them, "What are you going to do about it." The representatives of other states amused themselves by

jibing the people for thus tamely submitting to the loss of their manhood and independence, and sneeringly referred to each branch of the government as being under the ownership and control of this corporation and the Conynghams, and on this account ignoring the right of the people to any share in the general government.

To such gigantic proportions had this power now grown, and so insolent had it become in its mandates, that no matter how pure or talented, no man in the State, except through its influence or that of the Conyngham's, could ever hope to attain any position of prominence in public affairs, and then only by the most humiliating sacrifice of honor and independence. The natural consequence of this was that men who would have reflected honor on the people and the state refused to bow the knee to Baal, or like Mordecai in the king's gate, stooped not to their behests, nor did reverence to their presence; and the legislative, judicial, and executive departments of the government were left in the hands of the remorseless Hamans, whose ambitious thirst for power was only exceeded by their inordinate avarice and unscrupulous desire for gain, and those who, like whipped spaniels, crawling at the feet of their masters, would lick the hands that beat them, and cheerfully do their bidding.

These two combined monopolies of stolen political power and ill-gotten wealth, were united as against the people. They plundered them without stint, divided the spoils, and rode rough-shod over them, having rendered legislation a disgraceful farce, and justice a hollow mockery, every legislator having his fixed price, and there being but few judges on the bench who did not owe their positions to the manipulations of this corporation through the Conynghams.

The large bribes offered to legislators by this corporation attracted to its body men who were willing to spend their time and the money of the corporation, under the supervision of the Conyngghams, in corrupting and debauching their constituents, in order to get to the capital, that they might there avail themselves of "the thrift that follows fawning."

But in time the people became aroused and alarmed.

By long success and immunity from exposure and punishment, this Ring became reckless and insolent in their demands, and oppressive in their dealings with the people; while their open and shameless debauchery of the legislature and the judiciary had given the state such an unenviable and disgraceful notoriety as to become a stench in the nostrils of every honest man throughout the State, irrespective of parties.

When a vacancy now occurred in the United States Senate, the people determined to place in this high office a man who would not be the subservient tool of the Ring, and for the first time in their infamous career, the Ring was compelled to bow before the storm of popular indignation and to submit to the will of the people, who demanded, in tones not to be misunderstood, that a man should be selected whose high character and reputation would be a sufficient guarantee that they could not control him.

The company had grand schemes for a trans-continental railroad route, and unfortunately, at the very time, needed a man in the senate chamber who was possessed of great legal abilities, and upon whom they could depend to do their bidding, and be of service in obtaining valuable franchises from the government, and in securing certain needed legislation.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A CONYNGHAM CAUCUS.

As the elder Conyngham sat one evening in his library with his son, and three or four of their henchmen, discussing the coming senatorial contest and arranging their programme, they were an interesting study.

"What do you think of the company's choice for senator, General?" asked a thin, dark-skinned, consumptive-looking, little fellow, with bright eyes and a nervous, restless manner.

"He is no doubt a very honest man," replied the general, moodily.

"Well, that will suit us exactly," replied Mr. Questor, the Sphinx and Mephistopheles of the Ring.

Mr. Questor was a short, thick-set, little man, who imagined himself very much like General Grant, and imitated the taciturnity of the general so well that his owl-like assumption of wisdom and profundity never failed to inspire awe in the minds of verdant and timid country members. His large, dark eyes had a great deal of white in them,—eyes which, in a horse, invariably suggest a tricky and unreliable disposition. To still further carry out his supposed mental resemblance to General Grant, he was rarely without a cigar in his mouth, and he assumed a modesty of demeanor well calculated to deceive the unwary. He had succeeded to the leadership of the Ring by his wonderful adeptness in suggesting new and original

schemes for manipulating votes, and closing the eyes of the people; and for "ways that were dark, and tricks that were vain" he was famous. To him the Conynghams were indebted for the brains and cunning which marked their political management and wire-pulling, but for which they had always received the credit.

The Conynghams furnished the money and laid out the general plan of these campaigns, and left the whole matter in the hands of Questor and his subordinates. The first speaker, the dark-complexioned little man, was the executive of the Ring, and pushed forward their plans to completion, and to him was left the arranging of all the details. These men had no scruples whatever, and were all old ward-politicians, thoroughly saturated in the dirty mire of local political strife, and had long parted with whatever vestige of scruples they had ever possessed — if they ever had had any, which was doubtful. They were men who hesitated at nothing to carry out the purposes and schemes of the Ring. Coarse creatures, they not only gloried in their shame, but in their ignorance and egotism imagined themselves to be great men, and it would have been impossible to have convinced them that the respectable portion of the community looked upon them as common rogues.

So that they made money and could revel in gross pleasures were the highest objects of their ambition; and in order to acquire the means of doing this, they were willing to sell themselves body and soul to their master.

"I have seen a great many different kinds of men in my day," said the general, — who was very fond of indulging in long-winded reminiscences in which he figured prominently as the hero, — "and I have always found lawyers to be narrow and illiberal in their views. They never

only too glad to sit at the feet of wisdom, and humbly avail themselves of the general's ripe experience and wise and statesman-like views on great questions of governmental policy and state-craft.

"All I fear," broke in the younger Conyngham, "is that if Littlejohn once gets into the senate he will become unmanageable, and think his own ability placed him there. It is just such pious and Christian statesmen who generally kick the ladder by which they have climbed into power and place from under them when safely seated. I believe he will prove ungrateful, and lose sight of a fact, — of which no one is more fully aware than himself, — that if he does go to the senate, it will be through the company's money and our manipulations, and a lucky combination of circumstances. We have to compromise with the people this time. It will not be his Christian character, integrity, or legal abilities, he so prides himself on possessing, that will put him through; but, as I said before, the company's money and our work. He knows well enough that this infernal fuss about corruption and Ring rule for several year's back, has been kicked up by a few disappointed newspaper editors and office seekers. Littlejohn is very oily and bland just now, and while verbally promising everything, will bind himself to no pledges. But he is perfectly willing that we should do all the dirty work for him."

"I believe Malcolm is about right on Littlejohn," spoke the sage. "However, we can't do anything without the company's assistance, and they insist upon our taking him. They need a man like Littlejohn in the senate for the next few years, and in fact, must have a man well versed in law; and he is their choice. They will furnish plenty of funds if we put him through, and they will also guarantee

to keep him straight and not allow him to interfere with our management in the state."

So it was settled in this little caucus, in the library of a private house, by such men as these, who should be the next United States Senator. And this, long before the legislature convened for the purpose of afterwards going through the ridiculous farce of making the people believe they had something to say in reference to the selection of one who was to represent their great State in the councils of the nation, and to whom was to be confided the interests of a great commonwealth.

Before the election of a senator the members of a legislature, who owed their election to money furnished by the Ring, were quietly brought together, their duties assigned to them, and the cue given for carrying out their respective parts. Every man was given his approximate value, and where money would not affect them, on account of constitutional timidity, other means were found by which their votes were secured. All members were furnished with free passes over this company's road and its branches, against express laws which forbade their accepting them; and some of the very judges on the supreme bench were known, in the same manner, to place themselves under obligations to this monopoly.

In very much the same manner were selected and elected the governor, state treasurer, and all other important officers throughout the state, and, most deplorable of all, most of the judges.

CHAPTER XXX.

WHAT NEXT?

MALCOLM CONYNGHAM'S wedding was an event long remembered in the annals of Armour. The uniting of two such fortunes and families, so long prominent in political affairs, was an event which caused considerable comment throughout the country.

The politicians spoke of it as a great stroke of policy on Malcolm's part, for furthering the advancement of his political aspirations, and perfectly in keeping with his character as a shrewd and far-seeing politician.

"Ralph," said Hamilton, as he tilted his chair against his friend's law office, while lighting a fresh cigar in the bright moonlight of a delightful evening in June, after returning from Conyngham's grand wedding, "I guess you think I was about right when I said Malcolm Conyngham would some day be a great man. He has the field clear before him now. This match will help him wonderfully. Judge Charlton has nearly as much influence politically as General Conyngham.

"You know if Grant is again elected president — and it looks that way now — Malcolm will have great influence with the administration, and will get pretty near anything he chooses to ask for from him. You are aware of the latter's weakness for very rich men, whose bounties he has accepted so frequently, as to earn for him the unenviable distinction of having it said of him that he 'was

first in war, first in peace, and deep into the pockets of his countrymen.' ”

“Malcolm Conyngham may be a successful man,” replied Ralph, “but a great one, *never*. He has none of the elements of greatness in him. Owing to a lucky chain of circumstances, and the accident of being Jacob Conyngham’s son, he found everything prepared for him on his road to success. All he had to do was to stretch forth his hand. I admit he is great in one thing.”

“What is that?”

“Great in his unparalleled selfishness and avarice!”

“Ralph, you never liked Malcolm. What was the reason?”

“If you can satisfactorily answer me some questions I will answer yours. Did you ever know Malcolm Conyngham to do *one* disinterestedly kind act? Did you ever know him to have *one* warm, personal friend, and, with all his great wealth and numerous opportunities for helping his less fortunate fellow-men, has he ever, to your knowledge, done it, even where it would cost him neither effort or self-denial? And can you deny that all his business transactions have been marked by the most sordid greed and utter disregard for the claims or rights of others? As for his word, you know as well I do, that he thinks no more of breaking it, when it suits him to do so, than did Ananias and Sapphira.

“I always looked upon him as a very ordinary man, who is anxious to be considered a very extraordinary one, and yet, with all his great wealth and immense advantages over other men, he has so far only astonished the country by his utter disregard for everybody’s interests but his own, and by a humiliating display of mediocrity whenever he attempts

the role of a public man. He has made money ; but who could help making money situated as he was ? It does not require a very high order of talent to accumulate wealth. All that is necessary is to be mean and miserly, take every advantage you can over the weak, confiding, and ignorant, hoard up every penny and deny yourself every comfort, and you will be rich as certainly as you will be hated and despised."

"Gould, Disraeli, Conkling, and Cameron, are the heroes of this nineteenth century. And all succeeded by greed and mock heroics !"

"If Gould, Disraeli, Conkling, and Cameron, are our great men, — shades of Cæsar and Cicero, Napoleon and Washington, Shakespeare, Byron, and Burns, Jefferson and Webster, Clay and Calhoun, see how your mantles have descended upon successful thimblerriggers and span-gled mountebanks ! — *What next ?* "

CHAPTER XX.

THE WORSHIP OF THE GOLDEN CALF.

"WHEN I see people," continued Ralph, "worshipping the golden calf General Conyngham has set up for them, I would not be at all surprised to see him succeed to his father's senatorial robes. He will never startle the country by any great display of intellect or solid worth, and he will never be able to open his mouth on any subject, and communicate anything to the country, that could not be as well said by any pawnbroker or note-shaver."

"I cannot understand why he helped me in securing a position as he did, and placed me in a situation to claim my advance from the estate," said Larry.

"You may not know now, but you can rest assured that even so small a favor has not been given without some ulterior purpose in view. The man never did, nor can he do, a disinterested or generous action."

"What do you think of Littlejohn as United States Senator?" asked Larry.

"Why, I think the Conynghams will have their hands full if they attempt to control him. Littlejohn is as narrow and greedy for power as Malcolm Conyngham is for money; and the State is not quite large enough to hold both these aspiring gentlemen. The former is a good lawyer, but when you say that, you say all. As to statesmanship, he is too much absorbed in his own greatness to concern himself about his country's good. In cold-

blooded selfishness both he and Malcolm are very much alike ; the only difference I can see between the two men is that one has legal brains and the other has his father and money. Littlejohn is greedy for power, and Conyngham for both power and money. But as money is power, it is not very safe to trust either of them where it is or can be made. Both will abuse power whenever it is placed in their hands. Neither of the men could be elected, by the real vote of the people, to a Poor-directorship in their own counties."

"I never knew you had studied politics and politicians so closely, Ralph."

"I make no pretensions to being a politician, but as a citizen I claim the right to freely discuss these men, and their management of public affairs. The masses of the people are honest in their desire for an honest government ; and though slow to become aroused to their danger, when at last forbearance ceases to be a virtue, they will rise up in their might, and, like the blind and imprisoned Sampson, bring down the temple upon themselves and their enemies."

"Like yourself, I am tired of these men, or bosses as you call them, dictating all the nominations, forcing their tools on the people ; and running the government for their own private benefit. But I do not see what the people can do to rid themselves of these rascals and their pernicious system. Even the leaders of both parties combine together against the people when any attempt is made to crush them ; and together they force into obscurity honest men who really have the interests of the people at heart, and place in their stead the most worthless demagogues in the country."

"Well," interrupted Ralph impatiently, "why don't the wealthy and influential class of people interest themselves, and combine against these men? They could soon make themselves felt in politics if they would only take the trouble."

"You need never expect this class to bother themselves much about politics. They have plenty of means and can invest in government bonds. They do not care how much taxation is imposed on the people; if they invest in real estate their tenants pay the additional tax. They simply add it to their rent, and the full force of the grievance is only felt by those who are least able to bear it. To the great middle class must we look to give us a change. The capitalists and great property holders are naturally in favor of having a strong centralized government, and their interest, as a rule, is directly opposed to that of the masses of the people, who are jealous of putting any more power into the hands of the privileged class than they can possibly help. The corporations and the capitalists know they can, by paying, have all laws made for their protection and advantage. It would never suit the railroads, national banks, and other great monopolies to have honest men in the legislature, or controlling our politics. And they will support these corrupt leaders or bosses as long as they will protect their interests. Wendell Phillips never said a truer thing than when he said he never knew of a single reform, either moral or intellectual, that came down from, or originated in, the upper classes. All revolutions started from the poorer classes."

"That is true," said Adair; "but if the wealthy classes will not interest themselves in stopping this wholesale jobbery and corruption, which all comes on the poor men

in the end, upon whom can you depend? The poorer classes can do nothing. They have to vote as their landlords, and employers, and bankers direct. If ever our government becomes a monarchy,—and it is almost that now in all but name,—too much corporation, monopoly, and millionaire railroad kings, stock operators, and iron masters and national bankers will be the cause. Against the immense combined wealth of corporations or monopolies an individual has about as much chance to succeed, even by the most industrious and honest methods, as has a dog-cart in a race with the Limited Express. This ruining and crippling small business men swells the discontented and idle class, and when election time comes around, these corporations and the Conynghams continue their ruinous work. They debauch, demoralize, and buy up the poor voters, or those whom they have, by their cruel system of monopoly, thrown out of work. Here is where the great danger lies. Corporations and monopolies are making communistic outbreaks in the near future more possible than we dream of; and my only hope is in the intelligence and purity of purpose in our middle classes. When they fully realize and appreciate the two dangerous extremes which menace us, they will put men in office who are free from even the suspicion of affiliation with the corporation rings in either party. It will be their only salvation.

“Do you know whether Littlejohn is home? I must see him on some business before I return to Hazleton.”

“I think he is not in town, as I saw him go to the train this afternoon, carrying his satchel. I suppose he is looking up his senatorial prospects. Are you going back to Hazleton in the morning?”

“Yes, if Littlejohn is not at home;” and bidding his companion good-night Hamilton started up street, but was unable to resist the temptation of stopping on his way home to discuss the Conyngham wedding with Fanny, and endeavor to arrange his own.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE CAR OF JUGGERNAUT.

As Larry approached his office the next morning, he saw a crowd of men standing around the building near the depot. Amongst them was one of the employees to whom he wished to speak, and passing through the gaping crowd of idlers, he entered the building, where a scene met his gaze that for a moment, accustomed as he had been to the horrors of battle-fields, fairly sickened him. On bloody stretchers lay two manly forms, torn and mangled in a shocking manner, but in whose ashy and swollen faces he recognized an engineer and fireman with whom he had often conversed. Like most of their class, they were manly fellows, and their frank, honest, cheery ways, had attracted him. In the pockets of the faded and begrimed overalls of the fireman was found a bunch of keys and seven cents, while in those of the engineer was sixty cents, his book of rules, and a slip of paper which proved to be a letter which one of the brakeman had found tightly clutched in the dead man's hand. It was from his little girl, begging him to come home.

Hamilton hurried from the room with moistened eyes. What a contrast presented itself! Outside, the birds sung merrily in the bright June sunshine, and all was life and happiness. Inside, was death, horror, and gloom.

At this moment a "special" whirled by with a director's elegant car attached, on the platform of which sat some of

the officials of the road, with their families, — gentlemen who, on salaries of five thousand dollars make millions in a few years. Fat terrapin-fed-looking gentlemen they were, too, with all the appearance of general high living, and of lives unmarked by care, and their well-dressed and happy-looking wives and daughters chatted gayly to one another as they swept by.

"Ah!" sighed Hamilton, as he thought of the two poor fellows lying in that room; "how different are the lives of these men from those of their employees. The latter have all the responsibility, danger, and risk, and at best can never make anything but a mere living, and frequently become a sacrifice to the greedy and heartless economy, which prompts the officials of soulless corporations — all intent on declaring dividends — to ignore the fact that men are not machines."

As Larry sat in his office musing over these things, Smith, the dispatcher, remarked, "It was a hard life and a cruel death for these poor fellows, Mr. Hamilton."

"Yes," replied Larry, "and they will no doubt get all the blame for this accident. It is convenient to saddle such responsibilities on dead men."

"You are right there;" replied Smith, "and no one will ever think to give these men credit for the thousands of trains they have brought through safely. The conductor of that train told me that last winter he often worked eighteen hours a day, and that for a whole week he never took his clothes off to sleep. The flagman they blame for this accident, I know to be an honest and truthful young fellow, and he told me this morning, that this system of double-heading was what played the mischief. You see, by double-heading I mean the putting of two trains together and two engines in front. By running both under

one conductor, and one set of brakemen and flagmen, they save the extra amount of wages. It just doubles the work and responsibility. I do not wonder that when nearly worked out they can scarcely keep from dropping off in a doze on duty. I only wonder that there are not more accidents than there are. I have known these men to do this on terribly cold winter nights when it was as much as a man's life was worth to stay out an hour."

"Don't they pay them extra for such work or let them lay off for a few days after it," asked Hamilton?

Smith looked up in surprise. "I guess not; and if the least complaint comes from them, they are discharged at once. If killed, after having served the company a life time, their families can get along the best way possible. The company generally buries them and probably gives the widow a few hundred dollars. But what is that to a woman with a family of children to feed and clothe?"

"We used to think discipline in the army strict," said Hamilton; "but after a year's railroading I have concluded that there is as much, if not more, unnecessary official tyranny under these corporations than under the most rigid of martinets in the army, and far less regard for the comfort and welfare of the men. I only wonder that so many men can be found to work at the small salaries they pay. It is out of all proportion to the privation, danger and risk they run."

"The trouble is," said Smith, "that there are always about twenty men waiting for every vacancy, and knowing this, railroad officials are very independent. While the directors and officers of the road and the company make more money now than ever, their employees and the public do not share in their prosperity."

"It is not only in railroad circles that the evil influence

of monopoly is felt," replied Hamilton, "but the same grasping spirit seems to be extending itself into all kinds of business. The capitalists of the country combine together, and have laws passed by which they obtain entire advantage over the laboring classes, and which, under the constitution, they have no right to ask for nor obtain, as these so-called laws are directly inimical to the interests of the people. This evil has become so great, that, unless some remedy is soon found, I believe there will be trouble. It may be a peaceable revolution, and I hope it will be ; but it is the irrepressible conflict between Monopoly and the People."

"Why, you do not think we are going to have a French Revolution, do you?" asked Mr. Lennox, who had been standing near his assistant.

"History repeats itself," replied Hamilton, "and while you may call me an alarmist, the country just now reminds me of France in 1793. Every department of the Government seems to be reeking with corruption. Infidelity and scepticism flourish and are fashionable. Men seem no longer to regard religion with the old-time reverence ; while every one is bent on making money, regardless of the manner in which it is made. The privileged few monopolize, not only the government but, under the name of a corporation, are draining all the wealth of the country, while the toiling masses are struggling for a bare sustenance. What we call communism, to-day, is looked upon now very much, I suppose, as it was at the time of the cry of 'Liberty, fraternity, and equality.' Every one seems to have lost faith in the old order of things. We are like men groping in the dark. Not only here, but in Russia, Germany, England, Ireland, Spain, and France ; all over Europe can be heard the minor mutterings of the coming

storm. I believe that our only salvation, so far, has been owing to our large territory as compared to our population. When we become crowded, look out for trouble. The country is filling up very rapidly and the day of trouble may not be far off."

The superintendent of the road at this moment entered, and the conversation was interrupted.

A PARAPHRASE.

It is a wild, stormy night,
As an engineer sits by his throbbing engine,
In his cabin, awaiting the lightning express.
The dim-light gloams and flickers on the sheet
Of a rustling paper that, with eager eyes
And heart, intent he reads. Now, with a smile
The brave, manly face, lights up—
A smile that, e'en in the smiling, breeds a pain
Within his yearning heart: the little hand
That those sweet loving words hath traced, will he
Ever again in his protecting clasp
Enfold it? Who can tell? He can but kiss,
With loving heart, the page that hand
Hath touched. Each line, each word read and re-read;
At last there is no more. With swimming eyes
He sees those lines, with pencil widely ruled,
Where largely sprawl big letters helplessly;
What do they say, those baby characters,
So feebly huge?

"Loved papa,
When will you come home again?
My own dear papa!"

As he reads the cabin grows darker,
His strong hand trembles, and the hot tears burn
In his blue eyes, and blur the straggling words.
What need to see? The words are stamped upon
His heart, and his whole soul doth feel them there.
The wind on gusty wings sweeps by, and lo!

With its wild voice, his child's sweet treble mingles
In accents faintly clear :

“Loved papa,
When will you come home again?
My own dear papa!”

And now his head is bowed into his hands,
His brave heart for a moment seems to climb
Into his throat and choke him. Hark! what sound
Thus sharply leaps amongst, and slays the sad
Wind-voices of the solemn night, with shrill
And sudden blast? Down brakes! Down brakes! Quick!
The startled man, at the fierce appeals,
Half dreaming, clutches the lever:
The fireman, gasping, wakes, and pale as death,
Peers wildly forth, and sees, O, horror!
The lightning express upon them.
My God! the switch is wrong! he shrieks,
And on that father's breast the pealing cry,
Strikes cold as death, though engineer none's braver,
And still above the awful crash,
His pleading child's voice sweetly calls,
“Loved papa,
When will you come home again?
My own dear papa!”

Across a rough hillside the light of dawn
Doth coldly creep, with ruthless touch revealing
All that by darkness had been hid; and there,
Two mangled, stalwart forms, stiffening lie
Upon the blood-soaked ground, where the wreck lies thickest.
Dark dyed with gore, in the dead man's hand was clutched
A crumpled paper, 'gainst the cold lips the rigid hand did press
Some childish writing, by his life blood stained.
What are the words? One scarce can read them now:
“Loved papa,
When will you come home again?
My own dear papa!”

CHAPTER XXII.

HON. JOHN LITTLEJOHN.

OWING to circumstances beyond the control of the Conyngams, Littlejohn was selected by this corporation as their candidate for United States Senator, and, with their accustomed shrewdness and cunning, on finding he was to be the choice of the company, and that the people favored him, both father and son united in assisting him with an assumed cheerfulness they were far from feeling.

Every man, woman, and child in Armour was wild with delight at the unexpected honor thus conferred upon the town, and gray-haired, dignified, old citizens, vied with the noisiest urchin on the street in their joyous demonstrations, and congratulations of this, the greatest man Armour had ever produced. All confidently predicted a purer and nobler order of statesmanship, and prophesied the breaking up of the corrupt and thieving gang of public plunderers who had so long been fastened on the people. Others, still more enthusiastic, expressed their firm belief that Littlejohn would most certainly be the next president. Bonfires were lighted all over the town, and the village brass band of six pieces paraded the streets, frantically discoursing patriotic airs, and finally wound up, in front of the senator's modest mansion, with "Hail to the Chief!" Flickering torches illuminated the enthusiastic scene, and the crowd loudly called for "Littlejohn! Littlejohn!"

As the bald-headed little gentleman appeared on the portico and made his bow, he was greeted with the most deafening cheers, while the band played "Lo! the conquering hero comes." Hats were swung high in the air, while the band, carried away by the greatness of their distinguished fellow-citizen, and utterly regardless of the eternal fitness of things, quickly changed the tune to "Lannagan's Ball."

As the inspiring strains of the gay Hibernian tune stirred the night air with its quick, dancing music, the crowd, no longer able to control themselves, madly danced an Irish jig.

Staid and dignified lawyers and bankers participated in the delirious hilarity of the occasion, while the young and excitable minister, wild with the thought of having his leading elder in the councils of the nation, and — in the excitement of the moment — forgetting all social distinction, encircled the little butcher with his arms, and the two danced a jig with a vim and agility that would have shamed Barney Williams in his palmiest days.

Shoemakers, editors, and lawyers, embraced one another, while one old, dignified, and aristocratic ex-banker, and his friend, — who fondly imagined himself the leading attorney of Armour, and of both of whom it could be truly said that when they died wisdom would die with them, — completely overcome by their feelings, could do nothing but sit down on the curbstone, with hats off, laughing and crying alternately.

In vain did the great man endeavor to speak, as the rest of his large family, like that of the famed John Rogers of Smithfield memory, "wildly waved their handkerchiefs from as many different windows, fondly believing that they were now all senators."

But alas ! That there should be a serpent in Eden.

"Every one of these fellows are expecting at the hands of Littlejohn an office," said a dark-looking individual with a sinister squint, who was standing on the outer edge of the crowd, to his companion, Mr. Fox, "and they will be d——d badly disappointed, every man of them, or I have studied Littlejohn to no purpose. You will see the day when they will all be cursing and hooting him." The speaker had restless, hungry-looking little green eyes, and no other word but satanic would describe the expression of his countenance — a countenance hideous in its expression of deep depravity, and seamed with the hard lines of a lifetime devoted to the gratification of evil propensities. Treachery and malice were written in every feature, yet playing beneath was a vein of latent humor, shrewdness, and more than ordinary intelligence, apparent to those who studied the face closely.

This was Mr. Goforhim, editor of the "Armour Argus," a vile little sheet, which, vulture-like, fattened on the spoils of party strife, and on money wrung from the pockets of timid aspirants for political honors, who, dreading the unscrupulous and filthy pen of its editor, encouraged him in his despicable trade of black-mailing, either by purchasing immunity from his indecent assaults, or by hiring him to blackguard or abuse their opponents. A keen observer of men was Goforhim, and especially quick in detecting their weak points. Aware of Littlejohn's narrow and tyrannical nature, love of power, and perfect contempt for the people, he felt confident that public life would soon develop a character in Littlejohn that would very much surprise those who had hitherto been warm admirers of the man, and who labored under the erroneous impression that they knew him thoroughly.

"Why, Goforhim, what reason have you for thinking so?" replied Mr. Fox.

"Reasons? Plenty of them. That man cares no more for these people, than for so many dogs, and looks on us all in about that light. After the first flush of victory, and when he has become accustomed to the excitement, and the novelty of the situation, Littlejohn will miss all this fuss and flattery. He loves it like a cat does milk, and cannot well exist without this constant and sickening adulation. No flattery is too gross for him, and those who can pour it on the thickest, and bow the knee the supplest, will be the men to whom he will dispense his favors, and with whom he will surround himself. He will take no advice from any one and will run things to suit himself, and allow no one else in the State to have a word to say: that will not suit the Conynghams. At home he will punish every man who has ever opposed him, and as he ran twice for Congress, and hardly received a corporal's guard of votes either time, there will be a heavy score to settle with those who failed to appreciate his eminently Christian character, or neglected to recognize his transcendent genius."

"Don't you think he will be able to rise above all these little grudges?" asked the soporific Fox, in his most blandly mellifluous tones. "Why, in his prayers he makes a specialty of the forgiveness of our enemies."

"When he once gets them in his power he will make a specialty of punishing his," said Goforhim.

"I suppose," rejoined Fox, "that he will reorganize the political machinery of the country, and put new men in the place of the old ones, as nearly all were opposed to his being made senator."

"Yes, you may depend upon that. There will be a clean-

ing out of the Augean stables and a new deal, and the most servile and obsequious lackeys will be put in their places."

"Well, I guess if he attempts that game you and I will attend to him" chuckled Fox, as the band ceased playing.

The crowd having completely exhausted themselves, became comparatively quiet, as the Hon. John Littlejohn, with a deprecatory wave of the hand towards a group of small boys on the outskirts of the crowd, endeavored to make himself heard.

At last "order reigned in Warsaw," and the Honorable John proceeded as follows:

"My dear friends, fellow-citizens, and neighbors: To you alone am I indebted for this high honor, and you will believe me sincere when I say that this grand demonstration, significant of your endorsement of my political career, has given me more pleasure than my elevation to the United States Senate.

"That I have not sought this honor you all well know, and that I sacrifice large business and professional interests you are also well aware. But I am glad to be selected as the standard-bearer by the people, for the inauguration of a new order of things. The corruption and venality that have hitherto disgraced our national affairs, and degraded the politics of our country, shall in me always find an inveterate foe. I shall not, like some people, forget the interests of my people, and give all my time and attention to my own personal advancement. Neither shall I drag my high office down into the dirty mire of local political strife, nor use it as the means of rewarding friends, or in punishing those who imagine themselves my enemies, or think I feel unkindly disposed towards them. The fact of the office having sought me, and not me the office,

places me in a position where I can act independently and conscientiously. I am under no obligations to any clique or faction for my elevation to this high office, but to the express wishes and demands of the people, who desire a change in the manner of dispensing political favors, and who wish to see a different state of affairs inaugurated — a new era of reform ; an eagle eye to be kept on those men who have prostituted their high offices for furthering the interests of themselves and their families at the expense of the public. Rest assured, my fellow citizens, that in me shall this disgraceful nepotism, which has marked the course of some of our statesmen, always find a stern opponent. No member of my family shall advance their private fortunes through virtue of my being in the United States Senate. I do not look upon these offices as gifts to be distributed amongst friends and relations, but to be given to the most deserving and patriotic of those men who fought for and preserved to us our liberties. From amongst these men shall I invariably make my appointments, and not from amongst the politicians, or my own relations or personal friends. I believe thoroughly in civil service reform, and, with God's help, I shall endeavor to do my duty without fear or favor. Thanking you all for this kind demonstration, I bid you good night."

After this little speech, the Honorable John went through the trying ordeal of hand-shaking, as the crowd gradually dispersed to their homes.

CHAPTER XXIII.

SAVE ME FROM MY FRIENDS.

HAMILTON had fulfilled all the conditions required in his father's will, and could now claim his advance from the estate ; but fearing that Littlejohn, as was his custom, might refuse it on some quibble, he patiently awaited a favorable opportunity before introducing the subject.

The day following his elevation to the Senate he concluded would be an opportune time to submit the matter to him, as in all probability the Honorable Littlejohn might not soon again feel so benevolently disposed towards all mankind. After congratulating the honorable gentleman, the morning following the meeting, and making known his request, he was not surprised at receiving his funds.

The world now lay bright before him. Engaged to one of the most sensible and one of the prettiest girls in Armour, bright and ambitious, with the good wishes of all who knew him, Hamilton, was brimming over with his good fortune, and, unlike his friend Conyngham, wanted every one to feel as happy as himself. The first thing he did was to pay off all his debts, which were not inconsiderable. Most of them had been contracted in his minority, a fact which, so far from suggesting the shirking of them, to his credit be it said, was only a stronger incentive to their payment.

What should he now do with his capital was the all-absorbing question with him, and how should he invest it ?

To remain on the railroad in a subordinate position did not suit one of his means, independent spirit, and active temperament. The restraints of the position, and the airs of insolent authority he was compelled to endure from the higher officials, were not pleasant to one unaccustomed to submitting to them. It was one of those momentous periods in a man's life when the next step either makes or mars his future.

With no kind and experienced friend to advise him, what should he do? He could not go to Littlejohn, to ask his advice, for that gentleman, even if he had been on terms which would have justified it, although a good lawyer, had never been successful in financial investments, and had, indeed, often confessed that he had never succeeded in making any money outside of his profession.

Larry, notwithstanding Ralph's suspicions that Conyngham had had some selfish motive in giving him his position, still retained his faith in him as a friend, and as the latter was well versed in business affairs, and had been very successful in all his large enterprises, he concluded that his best and safest course was to consult him.

"Well, Larry, what is up now?" asked Conyngham, impatiently and rather brusquely, as Hamilton entered his friend's office one morning.

Larry had noticed of late an impatience and superciliousness in Conyngham's manner, which at times made him uncomfortable, but he attributed the cause entirely to preoccupation and the worry of extensive business—never dreaming for a moment that unless Conyngham could make something out of his friends, they bored him.

"I thought if you were not too busy I would like to see you on some business," said Hamilton.

A slight frown for a moment clouded the face of Conyngham. He was afraid every one who approached him might want some favor of him.

"Mr. Littlejohn," continued Larry, "paid over, yesterday, one-half of my principal, and I desire to change some of the securities and make other investments, and not knowing of any one in whose advice I have more confidence than your own, I concluded to call and see you. I would like very much to put it into some regular business, and you have many opportunities of seeing places where there might be good openings."

Conyngham's manner changed at once and in a few minutes he was very sociable. "You wish to make an investment, do you? Well, my advice just now would be to keep your position for the present, and put your money out at a good rate of interest, and wait awhile. If I see a good chance for getting you into some good business I will advise you. A few friends of mine are going into a little stock arrangement that I think will prove very profitable. If you would like to try your fortune in some operation of that kind with the rest of us, I think you will make something handsome."

"I don't care much about going into that kind of business," replied Larry.

"It is an entirely private arrangement. There are only two or three persons besides myself, — all directors of the road, — and if you are willing to depend upon my judgment and go in, you will certainly make some money, but if you do, you must distinctly understand it is a strictly confidential matter."

"I don't think you ever knew me to betray either a secret or a friend in my life, — did you?"

Conyngham gave an almost imperceptible start and

looked searchingly in his friend's face as he continued, "We have a little branch road — the N. and B. — running into an undeveloped coal and lumber region, and it is the intention of our road to lease it and extend it into this region. There is hardly any of the stock to be had just now. We are keeping the negotiations very quiet, for if it once gets out that we are contemplating such a move it would run the stock up on us at once."

"What effect will this lease have on the stock when consummated and made public?" inquired Hamilton.

"It will bounce at once to par. It is now selling at about forty-nine a share."

"Is the stock on the market?"

"No. As those who hold it know its future value, it is mostly in the hands of private parties, but I can put you on the track of a party from whom you may likely get some. Do you know the firm of I. N. Morse & Co., on Wall street?"

"No, I do not," replied Hamilton. "I have never had any acquaintance with brokers in New York, or anywhere else."

"Well, you go and see Morse himself. I will give you a letter to him, and he may possibly, in a short time, pick up some for you. My advice is to take all you can get. You won't have such another opportunity to make money in a life-time."

The N. and B. was a round-about route to a denuded timber country, in the northern part of the state, and a branch of the road nominally owned and controlled by the Conyngham's. It had been built many years ago, by a few wealthy speculators in the heart of a rich lumber country, and had for a while paid handsomely. But the timber had for years been cut off for many miles around,

and a rival route had succeeded in rendering the N. and B. practically worthless, although the local traffic through the thinly settled region nearly paid expenses. Conyngham, and several of his friends amongst the directors of the main road, conceived the idea of buying up all the stock which was then selling for a mere song, and of putting it on the market at a high figure, in the way familiar with such operations, whispers of coal having been found near the road, and rumors of a proposed lease of the N. and B. by Conyngham's company, were industriously circulated after these gentlemen had secured all the stock they desired.

Men with plenty of means, and ignorant of ways that are dark and the *modus operandi* of railroad stock manipulations, were given points in the same manner, and having, as they thought, ground-floor information, bought largely.

It was considered a fair and legitimate business operation by these men, and while the public looked on and faintly condemned the morality of such transactions. If they proved successful the originators of the scheme were set down as splendid business men and shrewd fellows, while the victims were good-naturedly looked upon as fools.

Hamilton could never have been deceived or duped by a stranger, but his confidence in Conyngham was unbounded, and amounted almost to an infatuation. Having already befriended him, Larry would have scouted the bare idea of any treachery on Conyngham's part towards him. Blindly, and with perfect faith in his friend's sincerity, he took his advice, and risked a large sum of money—equal to one-half the advance paid over to him by Littlejohn, for which he had been waiting for years, of which he had dreamed as the foundation of a magnificent fortune and

the stepping stones to influence and power. With it he had no fears but that he would yet show the world and Littlejohn, that he was capable of making his way.

Alas, Larry had no idea of that hardening of heart and searing of conscience that years spent in the pursuit of riches give, nor of that selfishness and cold indifference to the welfare of others, which the process of accumulation naturally entails.

Nothing more quickly saps and dries up all the fountains of human sympathy and manly generosity of character, than the eager thirst for gain, and the hard, grinding process of hoarding up money.

After Hamilton left, Conyngham sat down and wrote to his bankers — Morse & Co. — to the effect that a gentleman would call on them in a few days, who was interested in N. and B. stock, and to sell him all he desired of his stock at from forty-five to fifty. Conyngham had purchased most of his stock at various times at from six to fifteen dollars per share.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE MAELSTROM.

THE wind blew a hurricane, and the rain descended in torrents, as Larry stepped from the dripping cars in the Jersey city depot, a few days after his interview with Conyngham. He walked through the ferry-house and on board the boat with a light, quick step, and a high heart, utterly indifferent to the gloomy weather without.

The exultation of his mind prevented his noticing the violence of the storm, — so much does one's mental state control and color his views of external things. He was on the eve of making a handsome little fortune, about to be married to a young girl who was as good as she was beautiful, his debts all paid, in perfect health, in the prime of fresh young manhood, with plenty of money ; everything looked bright, and he enjoyed the storm.

As he entered the cabin and seated himself, he saw near him a wan, wretched, sickly-looking woman, nursing a baby scarcely a month old, and a little girl about three years of age clung to the mother's soaked and dripping gown, sobbing as if her heart was breaking. The miserable group were drenched to the skin, and the sorrowful face of the mother, and the pinched, helpless, half-starved faces of all three, were more than Larry could endure. Quietly reaching in his pocket, he slipped a bill into the woman's hand, and disappeared amongst the bustling throng of passengers.

As Hamilton walked to the fore part of the boat, and

stood gripsack in hand, looking pensively out of a cabin window. The rain dashed furiously against the panes and rolled down in little rivulets. Saucy little crafts could be seen on the turbulent river, flying before the storm and scattering the foam from their sharp prows, while two plucky little steam tugs were frantically puffing and pushing a huge and helpless ocean steamer into her dock. As he watched these energetic Lilliputians and their great helpless charge, he thought how much they were like their human prototypes, those fussy, active, shallow little fellows, in the narrow and tortuous windings and channels of trade and of political life. Where deeper and more thoughtful minds would fail, the very diminutiveness of their mental caliber enabled them to grasp the petty details of trade and local politics, unlike more stable and thoughtful minds, who looked forward beyond the hour. They thought only of the present, and could quickly adapt themselves to circumstances, and go where they pleased, either forward or back, without any loss of dignity, charges of inconsistency, or danger. Broader and deeper minds would float helplessly at the mercy of their insignificant rivals, — the more shallow crafts who remained in safe harbors and close to the shore.

The Leviathans sailed majestically and safely on the ocean, and laughed derisively at storms which would have blown their miniature rivals into ribbons.

As the ferry-boat swayed against the dock, the sharp clink, clink, of the wheel and chain gave the usual signal for the crowd to collect on the bow of the boat, each passenger eager to be the first on shore, like all impatient New York crowds.

"Why, Mr. Hamilton, is this you! This is certainly an unexpected pleasure." Quickly turning, to his surprise,

was Fannie's friend, Miss Emory, and a gentlemen whom she at once introduced as her husband, Mr. Renshaw.

The gentlemen bowed pleasantly and shook hands, evidently much pleased.

Mr. Renshaw was a fine-looking man with a good, honest face, and with a gentle and almost timid manner.

"Come and see us at the Hoffman House. We will be there for several days. Will you, Mr. Hamilton?" asked Mrs. Renshaw, as her husband closed the door of the *coupé*.

"I shall be happy to do so," said Hamilton as the carriage drove off.

"Renshaw! Renshaw! Let me see," soliloquized Hamilton, while slowly making his way through the crowd up Cortlandt street; "where have I heard that name? I wonder if he could be any relation to my Washington friend, Mrs. Senator Renshaw? He certainly bears enough resemblance to be her son. Well, if he is, Miss Emory certainly has a lady for a mother-in-law."

On a purely business trip and desiring to be down town, Hamilton put up at the Astor House. After finishing his breakfast and morning paper he started for Wall street — that voracious maelstrom which has swallowed up so many fine fortunes, and wrecked so many bright lives. Arriving at the corner of Broadway and Wall street, the clock on Trinity, with its ponderous strokes, clanged the hour of ten, loud and startling, on the damp air.

An undefinable presentiment passed over his soul, as the sound of the last stroke slowly died away, and so overpowering and unpleasant was this sensation, that he half turned away from the ill-omened street, and had resolved to keep out of the business and return home.

"It is only an investment and not a stock gambling oper-

ation," he reasoned to himself, "and such an opportunity for making money quickly may not again offer itself. After this, I will get into some legitimate business," and thus assuring himself he walked slowly down the narrow, crowded street, and followed with his eyes the innumerable gilt signs, until finally appeared upon one the name of "I. N. Morse & Co., Bankers and Brokers."

Ascending the steps, the door opened softly. As he entered a suite of handsomely furnished rooms, not a sound disturbed the deep stillness, but the click, click of a little telegraph-like looking instrument, under a glass case, on a stand at one end of the room, around which stood three gentlemen, anxiously watching a long narrow ribbon of paper as it slowly unwound itself from a wheel within. It was passed through the fingers of one of the group who called out excitedly, "Eighty, eighty-one, eighty-one and a half — by George! eighty-three at one jump."

"The Devil's to pay, now."

The three men were pale, nervous, and utterly oblivious of Hamilton's presence.

"Sell three hundred telegraph at eighty-three for me, quick," called one in loud tones, while the other two swore like troopers. "Go a half less," continued the speaker, "if you can't catch it at three; and if you can get me a thirty day 'put' on five hundred U. P., don't fail to do it."

This was all Greek to Larry.

This is nothing else but gambling, pure and simple — as much so as betting on faro. In the latter you bet that a certain card will turn up, and in stock gambling that a certain stock will rise or fall to a certain figure — that is all the difference. In faro, men are allowed a certain percentage of the winnings for giving points, or false infor-

mation, to deceive the unwary ; in stocks, financial articles in some newspapers are strongly suspected of being hired for the same nefarious purpose.

Stock gambling is the worst form of gambling ; and its effects are ten times more demoralizing than the faro bank. At the latter, a man sits down and probably plays all night ; when morning comes he has either lost or won. In either case the strain is over for a time at least. But in stocks, an operator loads up with or unloads his favorite stock — buying for a rise or selling for a fall — and is then either long or short of the market ; long when he buys for a rise and short when he sells for a fall. He then waits, O how impatiently and miserably anxious for the denouement. At sound of his door-bell his heart almost stops beating, and as a telegram is handed him, trembling between hope and fear he dreads to read his fate. Any one may tell him he has lost all and is a ruined man, and one chance in a thousand that he has made a small fortune.

In this miserably uncertain state of suspense and anxiety the victim may remain for weeks with the sword of Damocles suspended over him. At length the strain becomes so fearful that fiery stimulants are called in to buoy up and bolster the over-wrought mind, unstrung nerves, and weary brain, and to dull the miserable suspense until the blow falls. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred he loses, no matter which side of the market he is on. He is playing against loaded dice.

All the while the operator has been living in a frame of mind so peculiarly unhappy that only those who have gone through the mill can thoroughly appreciate it. His nerves have been taxed to the utmost, while his mind has been preternaturally on the alert. There has been no rest for him, and he loses all taste for ordinary excitement

and the pursuits which interest his fellow-men. He is apart from, and indifferent and callous to, everything going on around him. Things which amuse and entertain a man in a healthy state of mind bore him, and are as vapid and insipid to him as are the incidents of every-day life to the brilliant dreams of the wretched opium-eater. The quiet, even tenor of the lives of his fellow-men seem as monotonous and irksome to the gambler, as the treadmill existence of the galley-slave. Few men can operate in stocks, or gamble very long, without ultimately resorting to drink. The twin devils go hand in hand, and will, sooner or later, break and ruin the best man living. It is only a question of time with them. No brush can paint, nor pen depict, the subtle fascination of the first eddies of this dreadful whirlpool, nor can imagination scarcely conceive the unutterable anguish and despair of that wretched man who fathoms this hell to its utmost depths.

One might as well endeavor to reason with a madman as with a confirmed gamester, or stock operator. At last, under the insane spell, desperate, and still retaining that miserable hope for final success which follows him, and is characteristic of the confirmed gamester to the last, the victim of this vile business sinks family and fortune, and wringing the last dollar he can rake or scrape from family, friends, or acquaintances, he throws honor to the winds, and commits some crime in order to obtain means with which to gratify this terrible passion for play, and often fills the grave of the suicide, convict, or drunkard.

I have seen men of family, fortune, and brains, with the most brilliant prospects in life before them, in a few years after entering Wall street, from dealing in thousands of shares at the offices of the most aristocratic brokers on the street, lose all, and be compelled to move from their

handsome brown-stone houses, in the most fashionable quarter of the city, to some miserable tenement on the outskirts. With handsome house gone, family in destitution, ruined in health, and broken in spirit, spending his time in begging, and borrowing paltry sums with which to still further pursue the phantom that has lured him on to ruin ; and thus, lost to all pride and manhood, pale and trembling, in seedy, though fashionably-cut, garments, — the unhappy reminder of more prosperous days,—hanging over the stock indicator of some disreputable bucket-shop, amongst cab-drivers and news-boys, watching with insane and sickening anxiety the fluctuations which will either make, or most likely lose him some trifling sum, while his family dare not go into the street for want of decent clothing.

As the gentleman who had been reading out the quotations became aware of Larry's presence, he looked up keenly and inquiringly, and advanced to speak to him ; and, with a quiet good-morning, took the letter of introduction Hamilton handed him from Conyngham, in reading which, the gentleman's face wreathed in the blindest of smiles, and shaking hands with him cordially said, "I am very glad to see any friend of Conyngham, Mr. Hamilton, and if there is anything I can do to render your stay in the city pleasant, I am at your service."

"Thank you ; but I am on a purely business trip, and intend returning home this evening. If you are not too busy I would like to speak with you a few minutes privately."

"Certainly, certainly. Just come into my private office."

A glass door was quickly pushed to one side, and closed as the two entered a small side room.

Hamilton explained his business, and when he returned to his hotel he was a large holder of N. and B. stock. His crisp government bonds had been exchanged for the fancy printed stock certificates of a worthless road, head over heels in debt, and without one earthly prospect of ever being able to pay a dividend — a road running through a strip of country that, for all practical purposes, might just as well have been the desert of Sahara.

After dinner, taking a stage, he rode up town; arriving at the Hoffman House he sent his card to Mr. and Mrs. Renshaw.

The servant returned in a few moments, and informed him that the lady would see him in the parlor in a few minutes,—would the gentleman walk up stairs?

Mrs. Renshaw soon made her appearance, and excused her husband, as an old college friend had made a previous engagement to meet him that afternoon, and had just sent up his card.

"How is Fannie, and all the rest of our friends in Armour? And are you still a bachelor, Mr. Hamilton? Why, I thought you and Emily Charlton would have been married long ago."

Of course Larry had the delicacy to avoid mentioning Conyngham's name, and the two friends had a very pleasant chat over old times. Lou informed Larry they were living in C —, and that she was the mother of two beautiful children, a little girl and boy. From her conversation, and from the fact that her husband, as he had surmised, was the son of Senator Renshaw, he concluded that she had been fortunate in her marriage and was happy.

On leaving, he received a warm invitation to stop and see them on his wedding trip, as he informed her that he

expected in a few months, to make her friend, Fannie Adair, Mrs. Lawrence Hamilton.

During his long ride home, Hamilton could not shake off a feeling of gloomy foreboding; but an interview with Conyngham the next morning reassured him, and he soon regained his natural gayety. As the days flew by, he watched with anxiety every meeting of the directors, for information concerning the contemplated lease.

Conyngham and his confederates had, for several years past, through their brokers, been quietly picking up N. and B. stock at from five to ten dollars per share, and had now nearly all the stock in their own hands. Several meetings of the directors had been held, and wide publication of the fact was circulated through the leading papers, and all the details of the proposed lease were well discussed, and a glowing recital of the great advantages which were to result from it were set forth in the most alluring manner. The now familiar farce of an engineer's report as to the best route for the continuation of the road through rich coal and timber fields, which, in fact, existed only in the imagination of the deluded public, was enacted with ceremonious precision.

All the directors were more or less interested in the job. Some, with conscientious scruples in reference to stock operations, and careful of their reputation as leading Christians, made large purchases of worthless timber and coal lands at a nominal figure, and while these meetings were in progress, and the fever at its height, sold out at a figure which netted them a handsome fortune.

Meantime, Conyngham and his friends continued to quietly unload their worthless trash on confiding friends and the public, at from forty-five to fifty dollars per share.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE BURSTING OF THE N. AND B. BUBBLE.

MUCH to the surprise of all who knew Larry Hamilton's love of display and fondness for gayety, his wedding was a very quiet affair and conspicuous only by the absence of ostentation and show, which did not fail to elicit many compliments from sensible people.

After the usual formal wedding trip on the old established route, — New York, Boston and the White Mountains, — they spent several days with Lou Emory, or Mrs. Renshaw, on their return. On calling at Mr. Morse's office the morning after his arrival in New York, Larry was surprised at the warm reception he received from that gentleman.

"Good news, Hamilton! Let me congratulate you. You are in luck. There was a meeting, yesterday, of the directors of your road, and N. and B. has gone up five points. If I were you I would close out at once. You know the old saying about the bird in hand."

"Have they completed the final arrangement for the lease," asked Hamilton, while the blood leaped wildly through his veins, as he paced the room. The mad fever of the gamester had taken possession of him.

"No," Morse replied; "but it is as good as settled. Only a few preliminaries remain to be arranged; and while I never like to advise any of my customers, Mr. Hamilton, and have always made it a rule not to endeavor

in any way to influence them in their operations, I am very much interested in you, and am going to presume for once and ask you to sell. I have been on the street for many years, and know it is very hard for a new operator to let go, when he is sure he has a good thing and reliable inside information from headquarters. I have seen many men hold on a day too late, whose prospects were as flattering as your own. Take an old stager's advice, close out and be satisfied. You have now a handsome credit on our books—more money than have many men who have toiled hard for a life-time. But of course you are your best judge, and I merely give you my opinion as a friend. Bring your wife down after business hours, and we will take a boat ride up the East river. The weather is delightful and it will be a pleasant little trip for both of you."

Larry accepted the invitation and hurried out of the office.

Instead of selling he had purchased more stock.

"Yes, drive to the Hoffman House as quick as you can," he impatiently answered the hackman, as he sank back in the carriage. He could hardly realize his good fortune, and was feverish and excited. Visions of brown-stone houses, four-in-hands, and elegant and costly presents, were pictured in his mind. Nothing but a pair of horses would do for his friend Conyngham who had been the cause of his good fortune.

"Why, Larry, what in the world is the matter?" asked his wife, as he hurried into the room. "What has happened? You look as white as marble and your eyes shine as if you were in a high fever."

"Matter! Why matter enough. N. and B. has gone up five points and we are rich;" and, unable to restrain

himself, Larry embraced and kissed his young wife over and over again, until, between laughing and questioning, Fannie could scarcely get her breath. "Come on ; let us go down to Tiffany's and get that pair of solitaires we admired so much when we passed through last week. And I'll buy mother something handsome. What shall it be ?"

"I think, Larry, you had better wait until everything is settled and the money in your hands, before we celebrate our success," replied Fannie, with the natural caution of the sensible little woman she was ; and, in spite of his determination to spend a large amount in presents, she managed to persuade him to wait a few days.

At three o'clock they called at Mr. Morse's office, and after a few minutes of explanation to Fannie of the *modus operandi* of dealing in stocks through the indicator, the three hurried off to the boat, which they reached just in time.

The afternoon was delightful and their bright prospects had put Larry and Fannie in the best of spirits. They were happier than they had ever been in their lives. In their honeymoon, and having suddenly made a large sum of money without turning a hand or hardly necessitating a thought, why should they not be happy ?

Morse seemed serious and anxious, and very evidently did not participate in their pleasure.

As delicately as possible he still endeavored to persuade Hamilton, as they leaned over the guards listening to the sweet strains of the Blue Danube and watching the receding city, to close out his accounts while he could do so at a handsome profit. He explained to Fannie the hazardous nature of stock operations, and how quickly the tide might turn the other way, and she united with him in try-

ing to persuade her husband to sell. But when did any man making money rapidly, ever know when he had enough ?

"I will either 'make a spoon or spoil the horn,'" was his impatient reply.

"I have done my duty, Mr. Hamilton," said Morse, with a deep sigh ; "and I earnestly hope your most sanguine expectations may be more than realized."

The next day the stock still advanced and the other customers in the office caught the N. and B. fever on the strength of Hamilton's information, and with Hamilton kept loading up at these high figures.

Morse obeyed their orders in a sad, listless sort of way, in marked contrast with the joyous hilarity of his customers, who were all anticipating a big rise when the lease should be finally consummated.

Morse was suspicious that Conyngham and his friends were quietly feeding the market and unloading their worthless shares, and felt almost certain that the bubble would soon burst. But professional honor forbade the exposure of any of their suspected movements.

With one young fellow from Maryland Larry was particularly pleased, and he struck up a very pleasant acquaintance with him. His name was Evan Travis ; and from Morse he learned that he that day invested the last five thousand of a large fortune, which his father had left him a few years before, in N. and B. He had lost all in stock gambling in that time, except this amount. He had invested on the strength of the lease.

A month after Hamilton returned home, he received the following dispatch :

"N. and B. dropped five points to-day. Shall I sell ? Answer quick."

Hamilton at once telegraphed back, "No ; hold until I wire you. Let me know any important fluctuations."

During the following week N. and B. had fallen ten points below the figure at which Larry had purchased it, and his margin was exhausted. He had lost over one half his advance in a few months after receiving it.

Picking up the "Herald" a few days after, he read the following:

"**SHOCKING SUICIDE.**—Evan Travis, one of the old and well-known Travis family of Eastern Shore, Maryland, committed suicide in the New York Hotel, last night, by shooting himself through the head. Deceased called for his keys, as usual, before retiring, and after a few minutes pleasant conversation with the clerk, inquired if there were any letters for him, bade him good-night, and retired. Hearing the loud report of a pistol about midnight, the night watchman burst the door of Mr. Travis' room open, and found the unfortunate gentleman lying on the floor partially dressed, and bleeding profusely from an ugly wound in his forehead. He gasped once or twice and expired. His last moments had evidently been spent in writing several letters to his family, as the addresses were scarcely dry when the writer lay a corpse. Mr. Travis was a pleasant and handsome young man and very popular in society. Reverses in stock operations are the reasons assigned by his friends for ending his life."

CHAPTER XXVI.

CONSISTENCY, THOU ART A JEWEL.

"To what church do the Conynghams belong, Mr. Adair?" asked a gentleman visiting Armour on some legal business, as he sat waiting for the train in Ralph's office.

"I believe they were originally Lutherans, at least, when children they attended that church, and their mother belonged to that denomination; but as they grew up they wandered off, and attached themselves to the Presbyterian and Episcopal churches."

"The Lutherans were probably not aristocratic enough for them as their wealth increased!" sneered Mr. McIntosh, — the gentleman who had made the inquiry, in the little senatorial caucus held in General Conyngham's library, and which had so excited the ire of the latter by the remark that the people looked forward to seeing Littlejohn prove a second Sumner in the senate, and which remark cost that gentleman his political position as a member of the legislature.

The Conynghams never forgave even an insinuation derogatory to their influence or power, and they punished mercilessly those who dared to openly discuss their peculiar methods and motives. So great had become their power over the people, that the least assertion of manhood or independence in public men at once drew down upon them the wrath of their masters, and in spite of the protests of their constituents they were obliged to step down and out.

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"Yes," replied Ralph ; "it looked very much to me that way. It is a very unusual thing for people to forsake the religion of their fathers, and very few people can do it. I know I could not, unless from the most conscientious of motives, and the best of reasons."

"One would think the last place to look for aristocratic preferences and social distinctions," said McIntosh, "would be in churches. Christians all claim to promulgate the great doctrine of Christ, the very foundation of which is the equality of mankind and their universal brotherhood."

"It should not be that we should look to the churches as the umpires of social caste and distinction," said Ralph ; "and for the very reason that here these distinctions are most sharply drawn, I think accounts, in a great measure, for the fact that the churches are fast losing their hold on the confidence and the affections of the people, and why scepticism and infidelity are making such rapid progress amongst them of late."

"I have often tried to study the cause of the loss of influence the church at one time possessed over the people; and I believe the key-note to it is in the obsequiousness of the ministers to the wealthy and influential classes, and in the leniency they show to their delinquencies and shortcomings."

"There is no doubt that has a great deal to do with the humiliating position in which the church finds itself to-day, and has had a great deal to do with making the name of modern Christianity a by-word of contempt and reproach instead of an honor. We cannot but acknowledge that the name of Christian does not carry with it the same significance it used to carry."

"No, I know it does not," replied Ralph, earnestly.

"Preachers and churches may go on making loud and ostentatious professions of piety until doomsday, but while these loud professions are so universally contradicted by their practices in every-day life, it will only have the effect of inspiring the people with contempt for not only modern Christianity, but for *real Christianity*, too."

"When the small-pox broke out in our town, with but one noble exception, all the clergymen closed up their churches, unlike the physicians, who, to a man, after taking the necessary precautions, attended to their duties. Others quickly gathered up their children like a hen does her chickens, and, having ample means, flew off to a far city, where in a place of safety from the scourge, they congratulated themselves on having escaped the dreadful contagion, and, I suppose, prayed for the safety of their thousands of suffering fellow-men."

"There is," said Mr. McIntosh, "more marked social distinctions in churches, to-day, than can be found anywhere else. The front seats in nearly all churches are reserved for the wealthy and aristocratic classes, while the back part is filled exclusively with the poorer people. When they build handsome churches, run in debt, and find their exchequers low, they get a sudden love for the poor, and loudly announce from the pulpit the fact that these churches are free to all, without regard to distinction, but say nothing as to the position these people are expected to occupy in the church and its affairs."

"Yes," said Ralph, "and to see a young and nobby-looking youth, with fashionably-cut whiskers, between the age of eighteen and thirty-five, — for this is the kind now in demand, the old, staid style of ministers, being out of fashion, — with the airs and graces of a third-rate variety actor, get up and flippantly read out the hymn, 'O, to

be Nothing,' and a fashionable congregation arise and join in, with one eye on their hymn book and the other on their neighbor's seal-skin coat, and with elongated and solemn visages, proceed to sing, 'Oh, to be nothing,' when every person knows they are dying to be somebody."

"I wish, Mr. Adair," said Mr. McIntosh, after laughing heartily at his friend's description of the modern church people, "you had seen a picture I saw in the gallery at Dresden, last summer. It represented the mediæval nobility attending church. The service was represented as being held in a magnificent temple, with marble columns, costly paintings, malachite tablets, and splendid, stained-glass windows, with all the adornments that wealth could purchase or the imagination of man could conceive, while an elegant surpliced minister, in keeping with his aristocratic surroundings, read from the Psalter, 'Lord have mercy upon us poor miserable sinners.' And as the congregation repeated these words, like so many gayly-plumaged parrots, magnificently arrayed in shining satin and lustrous silks, and with their jewels flashing and sparkling like the mines of Golconda, what sublime mockery and hypocrisy were expressed in their countenances, their words, their worship, and their dress. 'Poor miserable sinners!' Do you believe they thought they were? The young ogled and flirted with one another, haughty and ambitious dowagers looked on approvingly, while here and there were supercilious-looking, red-faced, grey-haired, aristocratic old fellows, with capon-lined stomachs, whose purple veins seemed fairly bursting with fine old wines, and lords who could count their millions. Poor miserable sinners indeed! The scene would not be an inapt picture of one of our own fashionable churches."

"So long as this state of affairs continues, will we have

flippant fools, sensational young snobs, and theological mountebanks, who, under the sacred garb and calling of the ministry, will continue to give us third-class theatrical entertainments every Sabbath, and airs and esthetical nonsense where we should have the brains and practical piety which distinguished the church in its older and better days. Then men were placed in the high offices of the church for their pure and blameless lives, and not for the amount of wealth they possessed, or the influence they could bring to bear on church or political primaries, or on the ministers' salaries."

"There is as much Ring rule and Bossism in the church, to-day, as there are in politics, and the whole system needs a complete revolution."

"My ideal of a Christian is a meek, humble, unostentatious, honest man, who does his duty to both God and his fellow-man, not by lip service, nor when and where it will count most in dollars and cents and in prestige."

"I tell you, Mr. McIntosh, when the church becomes a mere instrument in the hands of the ambitious for the furthering of their own selfish schemes, and for the gratification of its members' vanity, it is no wonder that the moral sentiment of the community becomes corrupted, and the worship of mammon by the church communicates itself throughout society, and makes possible the political debauchery and corruption that we see on every hand. As long as a preacher's popularity is estimated by the number of slippers he receives each year, instead of the number of good, practical sermons he has preached, the number of conversions he has made, and the practical good deeds he has done, and as long as men are demanded in the pulpit on account of their pliability and obsequiousness to power and wealth, will the church be

left in the hands of intriguing women and weak men. If they are right and we are wrong, they will, in all probability, see in Heaven the prophecy of Isaiah fulfilled, when seven women will cling to one man for his name."

"And the prospects are that it will be peopled with a few converted heathens, some missionaries, and a very large number of women, with a sprinkling of male weaklings, saved for the purpose of not making the predominance and isolation of the fair sex too conspicuous."

"Why, I overheard two prominent church women the other day praising, extolling, and going off into raptures over the virtues and attractions of our new, young minister; and one of them wound up a sickening, fulsome, and idiotic eulogy of his many fine points by adding, 'And O, he has such a well-shaped leg.'"

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE ESTHETICAL RELIGIOUS BAND.

THE perfect fruits of this fashionable preaching is seen in the craze which, some time ago, possessed some of the most bigoted and shallow-brained of these followers of an esthetic religion. They imagined they had reached a higher life: what they meant by that term no one knows definitely, but from what could be learned from the victims of this singular hallucination themselves, they believed they had reached a stage in religious experience which placed them far above their fellow Christians, and that they were above the necessity of struggling against the machinations of the evil one, like ordinary mortals.

This craze generally affected women belonging to wealthy families, most of whose days had been spent in idleness and self-indulgence, and whose principal object in life appeared to be the conspicuous display of their transcendent religious virtues, as shown by great prominence in all matters pertaining to the ornamental and Sunday School departments of the church."

But this is an era of crazes.

We have all kinds of esthetic crazes.

The most ridiculous of all the esthetic crazes is the esthetical religious craze. One of these fashionable esthetic religious families, presided over by a highly esthetic, and severely self-righteous esthetic female (assisted by a plethoric, shallow-pated, easily managed, old gentle-

man, acting as elder by proxy for his more masculine and self-asserting esthetical companion), is a spectacle well worthy of serious contemplation.

In the churches where these esthetical religious women rule, you will invariably find the fashionable young preachers, the esthetical young men who "love flowahs, you know," and who have their pulpits adorned every Sabbath by esthetical female admirers with "fwesh, and innöcent flowahs you know — emblematic of our puah Chwstian lives, you know, ah." These are the lovely young men who go around in hot midsummer weather when the thermometers are away up in the nineties, sweltering in long, black coats, with skirts below the knees, black pantaloons, white chokers, and glossy, black silk hats — a walking terror to all people endeavoring to keep cool. They seem to be afraid to dress like other men, for fear their esthetical admirers might see the only difference between them was the cut and color of their clothes, and refuse to pay the deference due them as their "pawstaws."

The French were so disgusted with this style of clergy before the French revolution, at a time when the people were groaning under the exactions and corruptions of the nobles, and their tools, the corrupt clergy, that, in their, terse, epigrammatic way, they divided the human race into three sexes, men, women, and preachers.

"THE ESTHETICAL RELIGIOUS BAND.

"If you are anxious to shine,
In th'esthetic religious line,
As a man of culture rare,
You must get up all the germs,
Of the transcendental terms,
And plant them everywhere.

You must preach amongst the daisies,
And discourse in novel phrases,
 Of your complicated state of mind.
The meaning doesn't matter,
If its only religious chatter,
 Of a transcendental kind.
And the ladies all will say,
As you talk this mystic way, —
' If this young man expresses himself in terms too deep for me,
Why, what a very singularly deep young man this deep young man
 must be ! '

 " Then a pious kind of passion,
Of a Beecher sort of fashion,
 Must excite your languid mind.
An attachment a la Plato,
For coy and bashful maidens,
 Of a not too Frenchy kind.
Though the Philistines may jostle,
You will rank as an apostle,
 In the esthetic religious band.
And as you saunter down the street,
With a poppy or a lily
 In your soft, white hand,
The ladies all will say,
As you walk your flowery way,
' Why, what a most particular pure young man,
This pure young man must be ! ' "

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE TWIN DEVILS.

SEVERAL years have passed since we left Lawrence Hamilton amidst the crash of the N. and B. Bubble.

Instead of disgusting and completely curing Hamilton of the business, strange to say, it only made him more desperate and reckless, and he plunged madly into the vortex and operated with the desperation of a madman.

In the fierce excitement of gaming, all the wild instincts of his intense nature seemed let loose, and the love of excitement in the Hamilton blood that had hitherto lain dormant in him, now, like a serpent warmed into life by the congenial atmosphere of stock gambling, or like a cub tiger's first lap of fresh blood, awakened all the fierce instincts of its nature, and for two years he thought of nothing nor cared for anything but the rise and fall of stocks.

Unable to withstand the suspense during the intervals while impatiently awaiting the result of his plans, he resorted to stimulants, and soon found, like nearly all stock gamblers, that the twin devils naturally went hand in hand, in this as in every other species of gambling.

A singular fatality it seemed to him attended nearly all his operations, and rendered the most of them, no matter which side of the market he was on, unsuccessful. But it was simply the common fate of nearly all who were engaged in the business. The public hear of ventures when

they turn out well, but men are not generally in the habit of making public their losses.

Once when he did make a lucky strike which would have nearly covered his losses, and he had fully resolved to abandon the business, he found the parties who had operated for him were unprincipled, and irresponsible, and refused to make good their contracts.

Like all this class, they refused flatly to pay when their customers made a successful operation involving any large amount.

Morse had long ago refused to run the risks of operating for so reckless a customer.

"Oh Larry! Do for my sake quit this wretched business. Can you not see it is ruining you, body and soul? Why, you are not the same person you used to be at all, you have lost all interest in everything but these miserable stocks."

Hamilton, pale and trembling, had just read a dispatch.

Poor Fannie, as she spoke, threw her arms around her husband, and looked up pleadingly into his eyes, and as he looked into her troubled and appealing face, his conscience smote him for the clouds he had brought there, and with a forced gayety he endeavored to cheer her up.

But it was a very difficult matter of late for him to be cheerful, and when he was sad Fannie was sure to be sad also.

Yielding to her importunities, he remained at home that evening, instead of seeking the company of the gay and dissipated companions whose society he usually sought when anxious to drown thought.

As they sat together that evening, Fannie's countenance wore an unusually distressed look. Her sweet face, during the few short years of their married life, had already

acquired a saddened expression. O, how bright that life once seemed to her !

As a husband and son none could have been more fond than Hamilton, and his wife and mother had in their turn almost worshipped him. Of late, however, his heavy drinking and the fearful pace at which he had been living were beginning unmistakably to tell upon him. His face was still handsome and expressive, but deadly pale, and his hollow eyes gave him a worn and haggard look. His friends shook their heads, and turned away sadly at the wreck he was making of himself and his future.

His wife had long ago exhausted herself in pleading and remonstrating with him, and now could do nothing but pray for him, which the noble little woman did without ceasing, for she loved her husband as she did her own life. Her anxious and sadly perplexed face, and the sorrowful, tender face of his mother, seemed only to drive him into more desperate efforts to retrieve himself in the very business that was ruining him. He sank deeper and deeper into the mire, and was whirled with fearful rapidity into the innermost circles of the maelstrom.

Friends could be of no avail now, and unless Providence interfered nothing but death or ruin, or both, awaited him. The very energy of his intense nature made his descent all the more swift, and seemed to whirl him more rapidly to ruin.

Even with the terrible fate of young Travis before him and while perfectly well aware that he was fast following him in the same downward course, and with the strong probability of as tragic an end, one would have thought a thinking man would have turned backward with horror. But if ever the Devil once gets drink and stock-gambling as settled habits on a man, it is a combination from which very few are fortunate enough to escape.

He had lost all his money but a few thousand dollars, and his wife, fearing that this would follow the rest, had roused herself with the energy of despair to make one last appeal to him to save this and get into some legitimate business.

"You know, Larry, it always ends the same way. Even if you do make, you always go right back and never stop until you have lost again. As for the money you know I do not care for it a particle, only as it concerns your own happiness. Only think, Larry, of the way you have been living. You cannot certainly go on much longer at this rate without something dreadful happening. Will you let me read you a little poem which I cut out of a paper to-day?"

"Certainly, certainly," answered Hamilton as he seated himself on the sofa and drew his wife on his lap, and in her sweet, low tones she read :

"What art thou doing with thy life,
Oh, thou with many gifts?
Is thine a nature that inspires,
And comforts and uplifts?
Do those in trouble think of thee,
As of a precious balm?
And does thy presence lull the storm
Till it becomes a calm.

"What art thou doing with thy life?
'Twas meant for others' use,
And awful is the reckoning
For waste and for abuse.
Better to use one talent well,
Than to misuse the ten,
The smile of God is recompense
For all the scorn of men.

"What art thou doing with thy life?
Up and be doing friend;
The days, and nights, and months, and years,
Our God doth only lend.

If time was all our own, what then !
It might be freely spent,
But it is borrowed and 'tis theft
To squander what is lent.

“What art thou doing with thy life ?
Retrieve a past of guilt.
Alas ! thou canst not gather up
The drops already spilt.
But God will blot out yesterday
For the Redeemer's sake,
If thou to-day, with good resolves,
Thy old ways will unmake.

“What art thou doing with thy life ?
It is already noon ;
The evening shadows are not far —
The night-time will come soon.
And to the master we must go
At setting of the sun,
To hear Him say how our day's work
Has in His sight been done.”

As she finished the last verse, she threw her arms around her husband, and she cried out, in heart-broken accents, “O, Larry, Larry ! I never lay my head on my pillow at night but I am afraid of waking up and finding you lying dead beside me. You cannot keep up this strain much longer. O, if you would only lose all, and then come to your senses !”

Hamilton, deeply affected, endeavored to soothe his agitated wife, but all in vain ; and going to the side-board, he drank deeply of the fiery stimulant, he had of late been indulging in more freely than usual. He was sad and miserable, and his conscience lashed him like the stings of a scorpion.

“It is too late now !” he said wearily, while his wife pretended to occupy herself at some work which she had

just taken up. "I have determined to finish up the whole business at one stroke with Brooks, and several others, and sent my draft off this afternoon. In a week's time I will either make some money, or lose all. I have grown desperate, lately, and have determined to end it all."

His wife said nothing; but as she nervously continued sewing, the bitter tears slowly coursed down her wan cheeks, and the little mouth quivered, as she endeavored ineffectually to repress the sad feeling of despair which was slowly gathering around her aching heart.

Glancing at her husband's haggard face and supernaturally bright eyes, for the first time she noticed the hard lines which the last few years had left around the clear cut mouth. She was startled at the change. He seemed to have grown ten years older since she had married him.

"Oh," she mentally exclaimed, "how different all might have been, if he had only invested his money in some regular business."

Her husband noticed her unusually dejected appearance, and after several attempts he partially succeeded in brightening her up. He was passionately fond of his little wife, and was miserable when he realized that she was unhappy.

"Larry, answer me one question candidly. Even if you had been successful in your ventures, do you think you would have been happy leading such an unnatural life?"

"I suppose I would be about as happy as most men are. Some men would be miserable leading any other kind of life."

"Don't you believe that those men who are engaged in some regular business, and who are good, pious men, who

find their happiness in trying to make their fellowmen happy, have more pleasure in life than Gould or Fisk, or such men, who have made their money in gambling, and lived the life of terrible excitement you have been living for the last two years ? ”

“ I will be candid with you, Fannie, and confess that no poor wretch tortured on the rack, could undergo more intense mental distress and misery, than I have found in this business ; and I promise you faithfully that come what may of this last venture, I will never touch stocks again.”

“ But that is not the worst part of it, Larry. It is this dreadful habit of drinking which has grown on you so much of late that I fear.”

Unable to control her pent-up feelings, the poor, little wife broke down completely, and bursting into tears, sobbed hysterically, while her husband could only draw her to him and caress her tenderly.

Hamilton at that moment fully realized the anxiety and misery his course had caused his devoted wife, and also how far he had fallen in his desperate attempts to get rich suddenly.

As he drew her closely to him, she sobbed out bitterly, “ O, Larry ! your poor mother ! Can you not see you are breaking her heart ? You are killing her by inches ; and she is *so* proud of you.”

This was too much for Hamilton, as he cried out, “ Oh, my God ! Don’t speak of it.”

For Hamilton to lose either his mother, or his wife, was to lose all that life was worth living for, and in all his desperate efforts to succeed, it was for them that he looked proudly forward to enjoy his success, more than for himself.

As they thus sat clinging to each other, a low, angry roll of thunder filled the air. The afternoon had been hot and sultry, and a storm had for some time been brewing.

Neither spoke a word. Their hearts were too full of sadness and despair.

Flash after flash of lurid lightning made the room livid; and the deep-toned thunder crashed overhead, as the storm burst forth in all its fury. The rain poured down in torrents, while the wind wailed and howled around the house like the cry of a lost spirit.

Fannie shuddered, and prayed to herself amid the raging of the elements, which to her seemed so ominous of their future.

The next morning found Hamilton in a high fever, and unable to leave his bed. Stimulants for once failed him, and the overtaxed brain and worn-out nervous system, refused to answer the spur. Towards evening his wife became alarmed. At times he acted strangely, and looked after her with a wild, weird, uneasy glance.

Telegrams came in thick and fast from brokers, calling for more margin, and, at the same time, encouraging him to hold out for a day or two yet, and all would be right.

Poor Hamilton, weak and panting for breath, the cold perspiration rolling off his forehead in great drops, would insist on being held up in the bed, while his nerveless fingers endeavored to guide the trembling pen, as he appealed for loans to his bankers and friends — with the energy of despair trying to hold on to his last hope, and prevent the sacrifice of his remaining capital.

The next day he was still worse, and at times became delirious, while in his lucid intervals, he attempted pitifully and feebly to give some directions for raising the money called for, and eagerly inquired for dispatches.

Ralph had written to the brokers that in a day or two the matters would be attended to, and informed them also that Mr. Hamilton was not only very seriously ill, but that a continuation of this harassment in his critical condition might prove fatal. Still the unfeeling wretches worried and harassed the dying man with their incessant demands for more margin. Hamilton, troubled and sick to the death, and partly delirious, still insisted on opening, and making fruitless efforts to reply to, their telegrams, until, apprehending the worst, his physician informed his friends that he would not answer for the consequences if his patient was permitted to be worried any more. But this was easier said than done, with a man as determined as Hamilton.

A change did take place for the worst, and he became so ill that at times it was very doubtful if he could recover from the sinking spells which frequently prostrated him. In the meanwhile, his poor wife and mother hung anxiously over his bedside.

In the long, night vigils, while he thus lay hovering between life and death, he called wildly for wife and mother.

At last he slowly returned to life.

In the sad, wan, and haggard invalid, who, with his faithful wife, slowly walked around the streets of Armour during his convalescence, few who had known him in his gay days would have recognised the dashing young Colonel Hamilton who was, a few years ago, the life of all the social gatherings of the place, and whose high spirits and keen wit had made him a *local célèbre*.

CHAPTER XXIX.

OUR PROTOTYPES.

As he sat one evening in a large easy chair, pensively watching the fast-fading twilight, during his convalescence, the wild, turbulent past seemed to him unreal, and like some terrible nightmare which had passed away forever.

For the first time since childhood, he inwardly thanked God for having so mercifully spared him.

Although sceptical as to the methods and means resorted to by modern Christians to evangelize the world, and opposed to the fashionable and flippant treatment of so solemn a subject, he had still retained his faith in God and real religion.

As they thus sat quietly enjoying the balmy evening, Fannie arose, and, softly gliding to her husband's side, exclaimed, "Oh! we are so glad to have our dear old boy back with us. It seems like living again — doesn't it?"

"Yes, indeed it does," replied Mrs. Hamilton, while her care-worn face lit up with a tender smile, and her eyes moistened suspiciously. "It seemed, the last two years, as if it was some one else and not our Larry."

The corners of Hamilton's mouth twitched nervously, and he endeavored to turn the subject away from himself, but Fannie was equally as determined to take advantage of the opportunity.

"Surely," she said, "Larry, after your bitter experience, you are satisfied that trying to find happiness in self-seek-

ing is impossible. Why not make a complete change in the future, and try the other life for a while. Certainly, it is worth the trial, even from a purely selfish and worldly point of view."

"And why should he not try?" he said to himself. And he thought how peaceful and uniformly happy had his wife been in her worst trials, more happy than he ever had been even when the prize he struggled so fiercely for seemed almost within his grasp and the world looked brightest to him. It caused him to study seriously as to whether she was not right when she said a life devoted to self-seeking, even if crowned with success, could not be a happy one.

And from that moment he firmly resolved to pursue an entirely different course in the future. Hereafter, he would live for others and not for himself. He would lead a life that would make his wife and mother happy, and the world better for his having been in it.

Unaware of the impression her remarks had made upon her husband, Fannie continued, "Larry, O think, if you had died during this sickness? What do you believe would have become of you? Do you have any thoughts on eternity? and if you have, what are they?"

Hamilton had invariably evaded all conversations with his wife on religious topics, but this evening he was inclined to be communicative and disposed to humor her.

"O, I hardly know myself," he carelessly replied. "When I look around me and see so much injustice and misery in the world, where it might just as easily have been the opposite, I almost feel that the God we have been taught to worship from childhood, is a cruel God and unjust, and, according to the teachings of our Christian religion, must delight in our misery; it seems like mockery to

hear him called a merciful God. Then, again, I sometimes feel that God knew perfectly well, before I came into the world, what I would do when here, and where my soul will go when it leaves the body. If not, then he cannot be God. How then can I avoid the inevitable. I suppose at such times you might call me a fatalist. Again, when I see men like the Conyngham's successful in wickedness, and free from most of the miseries that afflict mankind, and reveling in ill-gotten gains, acquired by means that a just God would punish them for in this life, I cannot reconcile myself to the justice that rewards them in this world and punishes them in a mythical future one."

After a pause he resumed. "When we look about, and see the spider which weaves the web that catches the innocent fly, and the tiger who lurks in wait for his unsuspecting prey in the jungle, and the hawk that pounces, from the vantage of his high position in mid-air, upon his innocent victim below, I think how much men are like them, and prey upon the weaker and more helpless fellows; and I cannot understand why God did not make all animal and mankind happy, instead of living in constant dread and misery. Sometimes I think that human beings are simply animals of a higher development. Amongst men I have seen the owl, in those persons, like old Sammy G—, who look wise, and knowing nothing, say nothing—thereby getting credit for wisdom and brains they never possessed. Little sparrows, who have a hundred times the shrewdness, wit, and energy, of these solemn-visaged old wise-acres, receive no credit whatever. And then we have vultures and jackals amongst men, who follow in the wake and at the heels of bolder animals,—the lion and the eagle,—and who live on the carcasses left by their

more powerful fellows, like the local politicians and the henchmen of the Conyngham's. And we have the porkopolis, like the men who seize every thing within their reach, utterly regardless of the rights of others, and who are well-fed and fat with plenty, and yet who are always grunting and rooting for more, — greedy creatures, always around the trough, and intent only on filling their stomachs and their pockets, and who at last lie down and die, never having once in their lives looked up and enjoyed the bright sunshine and beautiful blue sky, and the green hills, nor heard the sweet songs of birds. Then I have said to myself, we are simply animals, nothing more, and when we die we have no more guaranty of a future than they have."

Hamilton said this in a half-joking manner that never failed to nettle his wife. Fannie never liked to hear the future state handled so irreverently.

"I do not want to hear any more of such nonsense," she interrupted. "I am used to it, ma, but I know you are not. He does not believe one word he says, and is only talking in this way to tease us. I know what his real feelings are in reference to religion. He firmly believes in God, and in the plan of salvation offered through our Saviour, but he has no confidence whatever in what he calls modern Christianity. I tell him he can set these modern Christians a good example by uniting with the church, and showing them how much better it is to be a real Christian ; but he says the class of men with whom he would necessarily be compelled to associate in the church, as a rule, are persons with whom he could never be congenial, and are generally those who have had no experience amongst men and in the world ; and that by nature they are so timid that they prefer being with the women and

their own kind of people, to associating with more rugged, masculine, and manly natures ; and that their conversation and manners are effeminate, and their knowledge of men and affairs of the world are narrow, the views held by them crude, conceited, shallow, and as egotistical as young college graduates ; that their company is insipid and stupid, and that their childish fussiness and silly pretensions of knowledge, as to the future and of life, disgusts him. But I tell him if he becomes a really good man he will not think that way, but will view these things in a more charitable light."

Larry caressed her fondly as he said, quite seriously, "Well, Fannie, for your and mother's sake I am going to try and be a better man in the future. I will give the new life a fair trial."

Hamilton was in earnest, and from that day forth he was a changed man. He gave up everything, and paid off all his debts as far as his means would allow, and honorably refused to avail himself of a legal technicality, by which he could have still retained a large sum of money—in contrast to the custom, so prevalent, of forcing creditors into a compromise, after which to bloom out afresh in extravagant display. One hardly knows which to be most amazed at, the unblushing effrontery of such compromises, or the peculiar mental and moral make-up which could extract pleasure under such circumstances.

CHAPTER XXX.

CHOOSING A GOVERNOR.

"Who are you going to make governor, Malcolm?" asked McKay, Conyngham's most faithful and active henchman, as the two sat one evening in the latter's cozy library, while discussing the political affairs of the state, as they would the management of a small country store.

"I have not fully made up my mind yet who would suit me," replied Conyngham. "This campaign, however, will not be near as expensive as the last one. The panic has made men very cheap. The only expensive item I see will be the fixing up of that d——d Keith. He has complete control of the Molly Maguire arrangement, and we will have to buy him up. If he goes against us it will give us a hard tussle."

"I don't altogether fancy the idea of dickering with such devils, Malcolm," replied McKay. "It goes against my grain to have anything to do with men I know are murderers, and if ever the people should connect us with this business I doubt very much if they would not make short work of our prospects politically."

"Pshaw! McKay; you are always and eternally harping about the people. Get our governor in, no matter how, and let the people go to the devil. They are nothing but a pack of fools anyhow. You listen too much to these sore-heads in the party. I don't humor such fellows, but believe in putting the whip to them when they begin to

growl. The more I see of political life the more I am convinced that these people like you all the better for being a little afraid of you, and in the future I intend applying the lash vigorously to some of these kickers. They want a good, wholesome lesson. I intend, when I have a clear field ahead, to show them who is their master. There will be no more of this billing and cooing which father believes so much in. When a dog commences to growl, kick him effectually at the start, and he will be all right afterwards. But show you are afraid of him, you will have plenty of trouble."

"How would Woods fill the bill?"

"He won't do at all. Too d——d much brains and too independent. We don't want that kind of men in any important office. Such men always give us trouble and are sure to go back on us after we elect them. Besides, the people have an idea that he is honest, and if they once get that into their heads and we are fools enough to to start him, good-bye Malcolm. We might as well commit hari-kari at once."

"Good evening, gentlemen. Plotting as usual," exclaimed a dark, sinister looking and very ordinary man, as he carelessly sauntered into the room and seated himself with Conyngham and his friend. This man seemed more out of place than McKay, in the elegantly appointed library, but his free and easy manner was explained from the fact that he was Conyngham's private secretary, and the man Friday who did all his master's secret and least reputable work.

"We are trying to save the people the trouble of choosing their chief magistrate, and Malcolm thinks Woods would give us trouble if he got in. One thing in his favor

is that he would not be very expensive, as he is very popular and stands well with the people. I think we can hold him level on that transaction last winter, but Malcolm thinks not."

"You had better trot out the noble war Governor. How would that suit the dear people?" sneered Bare, the secretary. "What trouble he would have given us if your father had not succeeded in driving him so effectually out of the party. Lord, how the old man did kill off all his rivals! It makes me think of a story I read the other day of an old Frenchman who when dying, was asked by his clergyman if he forgave his enemies, and to the reverend gentleman's surprise, well knowing his revengeful disposition, remarked that he had none. (He had killed them all.) Ferry, McClurg, and Custis gave him a life-long tug for the supremacy, but he was too cunning and his purse was too long for them. For a man to get along as the old gentleman did, with all the people down on him and those fellows laying the ropes for him all the time, took good generalship; but he was too smart for them. It would have been a bad old time for him if the office had depended on the popular vote."

"Yes," laughed Malcolm; "and I am afraid your occupation and mine would be gone too."

"By the way, I saw that party to-day, and he says Jack Keith has the Mollies well in hand, and not only expects you to come down handsomely, but to guarantee them a pardon if any of their deviltry comes to light. It would be a very bad piece of business for us if this transaction ever becomes known," nervously remarked McKay.

"It would not bother me much if they did find it out. What are they going to do about it? What the people say don't bother me a particle; never did nor ever will," con-

tinued Conyngham excitedly. "If I can get my man in for governor this time I will be in a position where I can defy them hereafter. How would you like Hausenplooze for governor?"

"The very man," exclaimed McKay and Bare at once. "He won't be likely to put on airs, and we can easily manage him. Besides that, he has the soldier element with him; and he is very ambitious but not very long-headed. He might give us more trouble if he took a notion to go into the United States Senate some of these days. It would be better to get him switched off the senatorial course as he might interfere with our programme."

"Yes," said Conyngham; "He is not so smart but that we can manage him. He is confiding and rather dull, and never sees too far ahead. That will suit us exactly. And as McKay says, we want to keep an eye on him, and switch him off if he tries to get the inside track of us on the senatorial business."

"He is very fond of gore and fuss and feathers, and if we give him a chance to inspect the militia often, and plenty of reviews, and send a few correspondents along to puff him on his fine soldierly appearance and horsemanship, he will not bother us much with political scheming. If he does, we can take care of him easily. I don't think we can get a safer man."

"His being so easily managed is his best recommendation, next to the soldier vote he will control. While he looks as wise as an owl he has about enough brains to make a respectable associate judge. By flattering his military vanity, as you say, and by promises, we can lead him around where we wish. He will submit to anything for an office or a prospective one, and like the crab, he can walk backward as gracefully as forward."

And thus this worthy trio of three as ordinary men as you could pick out of any promiscuous crowd, with the exception of the money they could wield, without further consultation with any one, chose the next governor for one of the largest, most populous and wealthy States in the Union, and the next day arranged their plans for his election. McKay had the vote of the Mollies solid for the Ring candidate. He had seen Keith and "fixed it," as he told Conyngham. Questor had selected Hausenploose for Conyngham with his usual sagacity. He was the right man for the latter's purposes.

Ability and popularity in a public man were to mark him with these men as dangerous, and one who was to be strictly watched and headed off before he became too powerful for them.

During the years which followed the Panic, and while the great mass of the people could get little or no work, and with wages at ninety cents per day, wretched and desperate, in striking contrast young Conyngham reveled in luxurious wantonness, lived in princely style and counted his wealth by the millions. As he rolled along the streets with his blooded horses, and costly equipages, poor working men crowded the streets hunting work, and with their wives and children at home suffering for the necessaries of life, they could but bitterly contrast and envy this ill-gotten and flaunting prosperity with their own miserable poverty and helplessness.

On one side, luxury and insolence; on the other misery and envy—not the envy of the poor at the sight of opulence they could not reach, but the envy of the despoiled when in the presence of the despoiler.

No wonder they hated Conyngham. Unlike Boss Tweed, Boss Conyngham had never been known to either

give them a word or look, much less anything more substantial ; and in his mammoth business establishments Conyngham was always the first to advocate the reduction of workingmen's wages. He despised them, and took little pains to conceal it. While he was intensely hated, by cunning and rascally manipulations their own votes continued this man in power. The people knew it, but seemed utterly helpless to prevent it ; and he knew it, and by his manner contemptuously asked them, "What are you going to do about?"

After his election, Hausenplose did not in the least disappoint the expectation of the Ring.

Questor knew his man well. He was simply a figure-head for Conyngham. They could not afford to jeopardise their interests by allowing in the high offices of the State popular men who had brains and back bone. They might thwart the many schemes of the Ring for plundering the state treasury, or stand in the way of Malcolm's ambition.

Father and son now controlled their State absolutely.

What a speaking commentary on the power of money !

CHAPTER XXXI.

SIC TRANSIT GLORIA.

Six years, with all their various changes in human affairs, had flown by.

Littlejohn's senatorial career had drawn to a close, and as Goforhim had shrewdly predicted of him, he had disappointed every one but his enemies. That he had legal brains and abilities even his enemies admitted, and if he could have added popular manners, and shown less servile obsequiousness to the corporation which had placed him in the senate, and whose interests alone he faithfully represented, to the utter neglect of his sworn duties to the people, he would have won a high place amongst his fellow senators, and the respect, honor, and everlasting gratitude of the people. It was in his power here to have given a death blow to the Conynghamism which had cursed the State for so many years, and would have encouraged the people in breaking up this insolent and infamous power.

Littlejohn was too ambitious and selfish, for his own interests, and had endeavored to keep in with both the railroad company and the Conynghams, but possessed so little tact as to openly quarrel with the younger Conyngham at the very outset of his career. The latter's power he had of late completely underestimated.

That two men so thoroughly selfish, self-seeking, and greedy for power as Littlejohn and Malcolm Conyngham

would naturally quarrel when, in the course of time, their interests should conflict, was very possible; but Littlejohn's arrogance and blindness hastened the denouement.

During the six years of his senatorial term, Conyngham Jr., never failed to neutralize all the former's attempt to make himself a power at home. Worse still, Littlejohn's exalted position completely upset him. The man scarcely knew what to get at, and made himself supremely ridiculous by his arrogance, childish vanity, and assumptions of profound wisdom and superior piety.

It was an able lawyer, and a self-important, self-seeking man in a very high office, which required an entirely different order of talent to adorn it from what he possessed. As a statesman, he proved a miserable failure; and as a politician, even in the best sense of the word, he proved the worst blunderer, and the most tyrannical one-man power the State had ever known, — until Malcolm Conyngham afterwards entered the field. The latter improved so much on Littlejohn's ideas in this respect, that with his power, backed by his great wealth, he was enabled to build up and solidify the "one-man power," which Littlejohn had vainly attempted for lack of cunning and money.

No cross-roads postmaster could be appointed in his native county without first consulting and securing the approval of the little man in Washington, where one would have supposed his exalted position and elevated surroundings would have lifted him above the petty strife of local politics.

Every man who had dared to cross Littlejohn's path was now made to feel the great man's scorn and contempt, while those who were in his power, or who had refused

implicit submission, were pursued and punished with a rancor and malice, that would have shamed a savage.

No one was permitted to even make a suggestion relative to the affairs of their own township; and men who had for years and a life-time supported and worked for the party were treated as impertinent meddlers.

When constituents called on him in Washington, if they did not come away with a very good opinion of their own miserable insignificance and Littlejohn's greatness, it was not the fault of the latter.

When one entered his committee-room, the distinguished statesman would look up from his desk with an unmistakable air that plainly said, "Well sir! what have you got to say? Say it quickly. I am astonished at your impertinence. Don't you know that the business of the whole country, from Maine to California, is interrupted by your presence?"

He was absolutely intoxicated with power and gratified vanity. He could not stand elevation.

Thus was missed one of the finest opportunities that ever presented itself for breaking up the most infamous Ring that ever enchained a long-suffering people, or cursed and disgraced a noble old commonwealth, — a Ring that had made her name a hissing by-word and a reproach amongst her sister States, and her great power a mere cypher in the general government, and which, for nearly thirty years, had compelled her to occupy a humiliating and second-rate position.

Littlejohn had obtained considerable notoriety as one of a committee sent to the South to inquire into the Ku-Klux outrages, but beyond that he was never heard of. His whole undivided time and attention were given towards the helping on of the great schemes of the cor-

poration he served, and for which purpose he had been placed in the senate.

When free from his corporation duties, his spare time was entirely given to having his photographs taken in every imaginable statesman-like attitude ; and glass paper-holders with the Honorable John's fiercely wise and senatorial countenance, glared at one from every corner grocery and law office in the State. It was a well-known fact, that in order to secure the great man's favor, the first step necessary to procure an interview, was to request of him his photograph.

At the expiration of his first term, and when he retired to private life, he had one brother a collector in a Southern port, who had been a blatant rebel during the war ; one son, a clerk on his committee, and another a clerk under a brother-in-law, for whom he had procured a fat appointment in the treasury, another brother-in-law in the United States mint, and a cousin he made United States District Attorney in the western part of the State. He would have appointed more from his family, but he had exhausted all the available male material on both sides of the house. And yet he wondered why the people were dissatisfied, and disapproved of his efforts in their behalf, — a fact he was not thoroughly made aware of until he canvassed the State at the expiration of his term, with high hopes of again resuming his former position. The only persons he did please, and whom he served faithfully, were the corporation to which this patriot and statesman belonged, and so well did he serve the interests of his masters, that they rewarded him after the people had emphatically refused to give him a second term, by making him a high official on their road. And to this day he declaims against the people as the most ungrateful of ingrates.

Goforhim and Fox had closely watched his career with jealous eyes, and they never missed an opportunity of exposing to the people his ridiculous vanities and pretensions. They showed up his truckling servility to the corporation he served, in a manner that he who ran could read.

"How much a man's carriage and air of conscious superiority depends on success or failure," remarked Hamilton to his wife, as Littlejohn walked in front of them to church, the Sabbath before the question as to whether Littlejohn would succeed himself in the senate or not was definitely determined.

"He is certainly doomed to an overwhelming defeat, but he does not think so. Fanny, look at him now, as, confident of success, he saunters carelessly along with his beaver tipped gayly to one side, and twirling that little cane so jauntily, while blandly and patronizingly nodding to his friends and fellow-citizens. Wait until next Sunday and then see the difference in the gentleman's air one short week will make."

A few days after the avalanche descended, and Littlejohn was so deeply buried out of sight that to this day he has never been heard from.

When the news of his overwhelming defeat was assured, Goforhim and Fox procured a calithumpian and the village brass band, and, to the great indignation of the Honorable John, proceeded to his residence, where six short years before the people had shouted themselves hoarse sounding his praises. The crowd howled and cat-called him, and would have added still greater indignities, if he had not taken the timely precaution and closed up his house. Bonfires were lit, and the bands made the night air hideous with "As Johnny comes marching home," for

an hour. It was a perfect pandemonium — tootings of horns, crowing of roosters, braying of asses, bleating of sheep, and bawling of calves, could have been heard for a mile around. It was simply hideous.

“Truly,” as Larry had remarked to his wife the previous Sabbath, “a man’s bearing in life depends in a great measure on his success and non-success.” The following Sunday Littlejohn’s appearance was really pitiable. He was the most crushed and insignificant-looking individual on the street. The cane had been left at home, the hat was pulled well down over the eyes and set scrupulously straight, as he sadly meandered to church, glancing furtively and timidly at each passer-by, like one who had been detected in some disreputable business. The man really seemed to have lost several inches in his height.

Littlejohn soon resumed his natural level, and the country breathed free again — “*sic transit gloria.*”

No man can serve two masters. Neither can any man serve corporations and the people at the same time.

CHAPTER XXXII.

AFFAIRS AT WOODSIDE COLLIERY.

NOTWITHSTANDING trials and disappointments, Fannie Hamilton was still the same bright, sensible, little Fannie Adair of old ; and she was now more than ever absolutely necessary to Hamilton's happiness.

Persons with auburn hair and abundance of coloring generally retain their youthful appearance long after their blonde and brunette companions have faded into sallow and *passée* middle-age. A stranger would have taken Fannie Hamilton, in her thirties, for a girl in her teens. Perhaps her sunny disposition helped to give this impression, and added much to her girlish appearance.

Hamilton himself had regained to a great extent the sprightliness and high spirits which, as a young man, had made him so great a favorite. But to a close observer the knit brows, tightly compressed lips, and the sad, almost stern, expression of his face, when in repose, marked him plainly as a one who had known sorrow.

He had not been idle during these years. Securing a position in one of the large collieries around Armour, he had endeavored manfully to redeem the errors and follies of his early manhood, and had made himself so familiar with all the details of the coal business as to understand it thoroughly. The knowledge of human nature which he had acquired during his former diversified and checkered career, combined with his natural quickness and adaptability, proved very advantageous in his business.

With the miners his influence was unbounded; and during the hard times which succeeded the panic of '73, while other collieries had great trouble and discontent to contend with amongst their men, Hamilton's firm, — owing in a great measure to his kindly mediation between employers and employees, — had very little or no trouble whatever.

While he was the sincere friend of both, he sternly opposed the attempts of either party to impose upon or oppress the other.

His own painful experience, instead of embittering him, as it generally does small and narrow natures, made him feel more keenly than ever for the sufferings and troubles of others.

The office at Woodside colliery, where Larry was employed, was crowded by the friends of Manager Skinner, who were noisy and boisterous in their congratulations to him as the successful competitor in a contest for a watch the evening before in Armour, between himself and the manager of a neighboring mine, — for the purpose of buying a library for the benefit of the order of A. O. G. F.

Notwithstanding that Skinner had obtained the watch, every one felt that his opponent should have had it, as he was superior to Skinner in all that constituted an honest, humane, and efficient manager. But the latter was a born demagogue, and as cunning as he was unscrupulous, and had obtained votes by resorting to practices his more honorable opponent scorned to avail himself of.

Several days following the watch contest, Skinner's poor, little, miserable soul, was in the seventh heaven of delight, and on receiving a letter from the firm expressing great satisfaction at this evidence of the respect and esteem with which he was held by the employees, he could no

longer restrain his bursting vanity, and rushed over to the store to publish this endorsement by the firm.

"Hamilton," remarked Honest John Miller, — as they nicknamed the bookkeeper of the firm, — "this will be a big feather in Skinner's hat, — won't it? There will be no holding the fellow now. He was conceited enough before. What do you think of these watch contests, any how?"

"I think it is nothing but levying black-mail on all who are solicited to subscribe. No one dare refuse for fear of losing their places or the patronage of the firm, and incurring the displeasure of the manager."

"Skinner takes two or three clerks from the store, paid by the firm, sends them off to the mines around to beg, coax, and intrigue for money to buy votes to secure him this watch and the endorsement it will give him as a popular manager. Meanwhile, the store is neglected, customers not waited on, take their trade elsewhere, and at the end of the month the miners are put in hard places for not leaving more of their money at the company's store. Then these clerks, to curry Skinner's favor, extol him to the skies, when, in fact, their hate is only exceeded by their fear of him. They spend days in the neighboring mines, throwing broadside hints that, in the opening of the new mines, Skinner would likely have plenty of easy places, and that he never forgets a friend, and so on and so on. Don't you remember that Englishman — you thought he had such a good, manly face — who was in here two weeks ago?"

"I believe I do," replied Hamilton. "There were two of them together. Skinnner badgered them a good deal for refusing to contribute anything."

"Yesterday both came in and got their due-bill. Skinner had sweated them out."

"That was too bad," said Hamilton; "if the firm

knew such things were going on they would send him away. They are honorable men and would not tolerate such work."

"But," said Honest John, "the amusing part of the business is that the firm has to furnish the money for an endorsement of its own manager."

"How much had that Englishman coming to him — do you remember?" asked Hamilton.

"About twenty-five dollars," replied Honest John.

"Do you know who cashed the due-bill for him?"

"Young Edwards, I believe. He wanted to go away the next day in order to get a job waiting for him over at C—, and complained about the way one of the clerks skinned him; and I know Edwards is the only one who has the money to cash that amount for him."

"How deep do you suppose he cut?"

"Five dollars, he told me."

"Five dollars for twenty — one week! I tell you Honest," said Hamilton warmly, "this due-bill skinning ought to be punished with the penitentiary. The poor miners have hard enough times to get along, between the store and order system, without these sharks' assistance. I often wonder if these unscrupulous managers are not frequently in cahoot with the Skinners, or in fact often the real skinners themselves. I believe the store and order system are the prolific source of most of the troubles, in our mining region, between the operators and their men."

In the collieries as well as amongst the large iron works around Armour, Hamilton daily witnessed the untold evils and oppressive exactions of the iniquitous store and order system, which practically reduces the laboring man to a state of humiliating serfdom, if not to actual slavery.

The wives of these men, often unable to read or write a

word in their own language, much less in English, are furnished with pass-books and perfectly ignorant of either prices or quality of the articles and material sold, buy with the recklessness and prodigality such a system invariably begets, and are utterly at the mercy of operators' managers or clerks, who charge what they please.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE CURSE OF MONOPOLY.

HAMILTON, after a practical experience in the coal business, was now thoroughly versed in all its various details, and was known throughout the region as an honorable, independent, and upright business man.

A gentleman possessing considerable capital, desiring a partner who understood the coal business, proposed to him a partnership on very favorable terms. With the advice of the railroad company's civil engineer they purchased large tracts of valuable coal lands along a proposed route of a new branch about to be built by the company, and which had already been surveyed, and upon which work was soon to be commenced.

To their surprise and astonishment, after their purchases had been completed, the road was resurveyed, and, for some ostensibly technical reason, was so changed as to compel Hamilton and other parties to build some miles of railroad.

The real reason why the route was changed was the purchase of large tracts of coal land, in the locality of the new route, by certain parties who were acting in the interest of the leading officials of the great railroad monopoly, which controlled the State.

The consequence was, that in building their own route, Hamilton and his friends made sad inroads on their capital at the very time they needed it most. Here their real

trouble only commenced. Entering as they did into competition with this mammoth monopoly they found, as other individuals had done before in the iron and all other businesses, that when a railroad official or his kinsman is interested in the same business it is folly to endeavor to compete with them.

They were harrassed at every step by their powerful rivals. When business was brisk, or in the midst of a large contract, while cars were blocking up the sidings of their rivals, they were compelled to lie idle for days for the want of them, and meekly accept what cars they could get. This was bad enough — but worse still. By secret compacts with the railroad company and by a system of drawbacks, the firms in which the railroad officials were interested were enabled by lower freight rates to undersell them in every market.

After a few years of ruinous competition, they were finally compelled to sell out, at a great sacrifice, to their rivals.

The corporation had crushed them and added another business firm to the innumerable victims of a cruel system of monopoly.

All industries are at the mercy of the railroads, and more particularly the coal and iron interests.

Everywhere the iron heel of this tyrant, Monopoly, appeared. There was no business but what felt its blighting influence. Railroad officials and those who were within the charmed circle were secretly interested in nearly all the large paying businesses. Everything was done quietly, and on the surface no railroad influence was apparent.

How on a salary of five thousand dollars can a young official, in a few years, make millions !

How can they, by simply writing their names or by a word, make their own fortunes and unmake others!

Instead of the plain Republic of our fathers and a "government of the people, from the people, and for the people" it was of late plainly apparent that these monopolists, millionaires, railroad kings, and political bosses desired, and were endeavoring to form, a strong centralized government and an aristocratic and privileged class to rule, to the exclusion of the people. And as there could be no organized or hereditary nobility to draw the line between themselves and the masses, money was to be the emblem of distinction and the golden calf the object of worship and the symbol of power.

Like Louis Bonaparte, this leagued oligarchy, while pretending to rule by the free vote of the people, had seated themselves in and perpetuated their power, by providing a huge corruption fund for buying up the politicians, and through them for ruling and controlling votes.

These grasping combinations of capital and political power were fast engendering a dangerous feeling of discontent, regardless of party affiliation—a feeling which boded no good in the near future.

Hamilton apprehended the very worst of consequences if the people did not soon realize the extent of their danger and unite in one common cause to curtail and restrain, with a firm hand, the insolent encroachments and tyranny of monopoly. He felt confident that the party which refused to espouse the cause of the people must go down under the coming conflict between the people and monopoly.

Sectionalism and slavery were dead, and as both parties had their best and most prominent men from the people,

and as our greatest men had espoused and upheld the great doctrines of Jefferson, and believed in the rule of the many and not the privileged few before the war, and only forsook the faith of their fathers on account of slavery, he could not see why, now that slavery was a dead issue, they could not resume their old place in the ranks of democracy with a clearer conscience than ever. If they considered democracy sound doctrine with the festering sore of slavery attached to it, why could they not now acknowledge it as the party of the people more than ever.

But like a great many republicans, Hamilton still felt reluctant to leave his party even for conscience' sake for fear of giving the government over into the control of those who had recently endeavored to destroy it. And while disgusted at the venality, wholesale corruption, and tendency to favor corporations, establish aristocratic distinctions, and favor the few against the many, which had marked the dominant party's career ever since the close of the Rebellion, it was this fear alone that deterred him from openly espousing the party of the people. But he resolved that when the time came that he was fully satisfied sectionalism was really dead and the South thoroughly united, he would at once unite with the democracy, believing it the party whose doctrines were best calculated to further the interests and happiness of the greatest number.

In reply to the oft-repeated remonstrances of an outraged people he had seen their appeals treated with the silent contempt of conscious power, while their oppressors sneeringly asked them "What are you going to do about it?"

He believed the only way the people could answer this insolent appeal of a monopoly party, drunk with power and success, was to select good men and new men from

the ranks, and have nothing whatever to do with those professional leaders of the democracy, who in the past had shown their unfitness to be leaders by their truckling servility and obsequiousness to corporate power and affiliation with the dominant monopoly-party when it suited their interests to do so, regardless of the welfare of their constituents and their party.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

JAY GOULD.

FANNIE had been busy all day preparing a supper for some gentlemen who had been prominently identified with a new political movement, the object of which was the dethronement of the Conyngham dynasty throughout their congressional district. And they had chosen Hamilton as their standard-bearer in the coming contest.

After a good supper the gentlemen distributed themselves in groups through Hamilton's pleasant parlors, and enjoyed themselves as only men can who are united in a common cause, and agreeably discussed their plans and purposes over fine Havanas and well-filled stomachs.

In one of these groups in a far corner of the room were our old friends, Woods, McIntosh, Ralph Adair, and several other gentlemen, engaged in an animated discussion of the absorbing topic — the coming political campaign.

"Guess who they are going to run against you, Larry?" asked Ralph.

"I should not be surprised if they would run the devil himself, provided they succeeded in securing him. He has all the qualifications necessary to make a good Conyngham man, and would suit the Ring in every respect. All they require is to understand their simple rule of three — 'addition, division, and silence' — and not to be fettered with the ten commandments."

"Well, who do you think has been elected by the Ring to fill your bill?"

"I can not guess. I have heard several persons spoken of who are known to be in the Ring's favor. But I do hope they will put up a decent man; so that if he does defeat me, it will not necessarily be a humiliation. There is some honor in meeting and battling with a foeman worthy of your steel, even if you are worsted in the contest."

"Well," laughed Ralph, "you have got him. Goforhim is to be your man."

"What! You don't say so?" asked Hamilton, excitedly, as he rose to his feet. "Why, I would rather run against Malcolm Conyngham himself. It cannot surely be possible he would thus dare to insult the people of this district by running such a man as Goforhim for Congress. Why, the people will bury him clear out of sight. This man represents the very worst elements of the Ring. And besides, he is the most contemptible character in the community. Surely, Conyngham has enough manhood left not to reward that scoundrel for his dastardly work some years ago. I often wonder how Conyngham could pass that matter over without chastising Goforhim. But your plotting, calculating, scheming, money-making men, are generally physically timid. During our war you would always find such fellows busy contracting and making money safe at home, while the brave men were in front."

"I believe Larry is about right when he speaks of great money makers being naturally timid physically," said Ralph. "There was one of the Rothschilds, it is said, who had himself guarded day and night, and whose whole life was made miserable by fear. I remember once of calling on Jay Gould on some business, and from the accounts of him, like the rest of people who had heard of his bold operations on the street, I expected to see one whose physique, in some measure, would indicate the

nerve and pluck which marked his bold operations on the street. On mounting the steps of a brown-stone, corner house on Fifth Avenue, and ringing the bell, a servant noiselessly opened the door, and ushered me into a small, but well furnished parlor. There was nothing different in the size and appointments of the room from hundreds of other parlors of men in comfortable circumstances throughout the city, excepting the death-like stillness which prevailed. The carpets were so thick that no foot-fall could be heard. The very walls seemed padded. No child's merry laugh resounded through this sepulchral home, nor did even the subdued voices of servants break the painful, oppressive silence. It was all utterly unlike the splendid home that my imagination had pictured as the abode of the magnate of the street, and the great railroad king, who now controlled more miles of railroad and telegraph than any other individual on the globe, and whose name is the synonym of more power than that of the president himself; who has not only his judges along the lines of the railroads he controls, but also on the bench of the most august tribunal of the land, and who, in fact, to a very great and dangerous extent controls and bends to his own private purposes even the national legislature itself.

"While looking at a picture, although hearing no sound. I suddenly experienced an undefinable sensation of another's presence; and as I turned, I saw timidly approaching me a little, insignificant-looking person, with a shrinking, hesitating manner, and a searching, uneasy glance from rather soft and effeminate dark eyes.

"Here before me stood the man who had wrecked more fortunes, and ruined more reputations, and driven to prison and to untimely deaths and dishonored graves

more promising business men, and who had beggared more wealthy families, and made more human misery, than any other one man in the country. This little, insignificant, diminutive, and furtive, hare-like creature, standing shrinkingly and with down-cast eyes before me, looking almost ready to fly at a loud or angry word, was the great Jay Gould !

"Any enterprise this man chose to attack and destroy was a helpless victim, and he pursued his nefarious and ghoul-like business mercilessly and heartlessly.

"In a voice scarcely above a whisper he answered in monosyllables some questions I asked, and at the sound of his own voice glanced fearfully around as if pursued by some Nemesis.

"Was he thinking of, or apprehending the fate of his partner ?

"I was never so perfectly surprised in my life, and could scarcely realize that this was the bold operator whose name carried terror on the streets, and whose fiat made and unmade fortunes in an hour. This was the ideal hero of the nineteenth century, the hero of the people who worshipped the golden calf, and recognised the dollars as king."

"Even if Conyngham," said Hamilton, "was too timid to resent such an attack, I never believed it possible that he could be so lost to all sense of manhood, as to stoop to ally himself with this man Goforhim, and endeavor to force him into Congress against the sentiments of an outraged community."

"Pshaw !" said Ralph, impatiently, "I always told you, Larry, that Malcolm Conyngham would do anything for money or power. He don't feel about these matters as other people would. So he is successful that is all he

cares for, if he makes money, or acquires more power he does not care a picayune what people say or think ; and you can make up your mind that his intentions are to give you one of the dirtiest campaigns that the State has ever known. When he takes up a man like Goforhim, depend upon it, a cesspool is to be opened upon you. There is nothing he won't do to vindicate his course at home. He has a pride in that."

considering the odds they had to contend with and the unscrupulous methods which had been brought to bear against him,—the rest of the district went overwhelmingly for Goforhim.

It might have resulted differently had Hamilton listened to the advice of some of his friends, and fought the devil with fire. He had plenty of material, and need not to have drawn upon his imagination, as his opponent did in trumping up charges against him. But he scorned to resort to such vile methods.

In many cases workingmen were forced to vote for the Conyngham candidates by open threats of discharge; and few men dare quarrel with their bread and butter,—especially if they have a large family, and a hard winter before them.

As Fannie and Larry were proceeding to church the following Sunday, Goforhim was met on the way receiving the congratulations of the members of the congregation who were near him.

The minister stood obsequiously waiting in the vestibule, and after shaking hands with the great man, he kissed the Conyngham children.

“That is what is killing the church, Fannie,” said Larry, bitterly. “Do not wonder that men look on your services as a mere fashionable dress parade, and place no confidence in either their sincerity or professions. It is not the infidelity of Ingersol, or the inconsistencies of Beecher and other prominent men of the church, that are the cause of the church’s loss of influence amongst men. It is just such truckling to corruptly-acquired power and ill-gotten wealth, as you have just witnessed this morning to this fellow Goforhim and his master, by your ministers and the leading elders and influential people in your congregations,

that does all the mischief. These people know as well as I do that these men are fairly reeking with political corruption and private immorality, and that they have in the last few weeks been the cause of more drunkenness and misery than any other set of men throughout the country. Yet as they are successful, these Christians — God save the mark! — are amongst the first to offer their congratulations."

"I know all that, Larry," gently replied Fannie; "and that it is all wrong; but it is no reason for censuring all Christians, you know. There are good men in the church who despise these men as much as you do."

"They are very few, and if they do they take good care not to let any one know it. If the preachers had a spark of manhood, and would boldly denounce such rascality from their pulpits in the way they should denounce it, and if their elders unite with the minister in the good work, and assist him heart and soul, and treat such creatures as they deserve, it would not be long before the people would take the cue, and there would in a very short time be an end to Conynghamism, and more respect for church people throughout the land."

As the hymn was given out, and the congregation began to sing, Hamilton could scarcely repress a smile on looking around and seeing Conyngham and Goforhim singing away for dear life, and with unctuous and pious countenances a saint might have envied,

"Let sinners take their course,
And choose the road to death,
But in the worship of my God
I'll spend my daily breath."

This was bad enough, but he fairly groaned when Goforhim, who was a professed Christian, and never failed to

commune, proceeded to take the penny collection. He firmly believed that personal prominence in church affairs made up for spiritual deficiencies. Exceedingly vain and fond of dress as he was, he now wore a white necktie, imagining that thereby he added to his new dignity; and, conscious of his great importance, while fairly bursting with gratified vanity, it was really amusing to watch this immaculate Christian statesman while he proceeded to hand around the box.

He smiled in a blandly triumphant manner on his extinguished rival for congressional honors.

After an earnest exhortation and an eloquent appeal for means to educate the colored men in the Linkum University, for the better furthering of the missionary cause in benighted Africa, a fervent prayer was offered up and a blessing asked upon our President and the Congress of the United States and on our rulers generally; and the congregation was dismissed.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

RING DOWN THE CURTAIN.

GENERAL Grant's peculiar taciturnity, and epigrammatic wisdom had been so much lauded by the country, as evidence of genius and of profundity of thought, that young Conyngham, as well as Questor, endeavored to imitate the great man in this respect.

It suited the former wonderfully well to assume the character of a Sphynx, as he had no conversational powers whatever, and possessed very few intelligent ideas outside of routine business matters, and more unfortunate still, he could not express the few ideas he had in a manner either intelligent or attractive.

These two worthies invariably listened to the conversation of others with a mock gravity and an owl-like assumption of superior wisdom which were not only ridiculous but painfully embarrassing to men of sense, who knew that it was only assumed for the occasion, and were perfectly aware that behind this shallow mask lay nothing but the small brains and low cunning of the pot-house politician.

Conyngham was neither social nor convivially inclined, and when people called on him either in a business or social way, he rudely answered them in monosyllables, and took no pains to conceal the fact that any conversation which did not bear directly on his own selfish interest bored him, much to the discomfiture and embarrassment of his guests.

Had he moved in a more humble sphere, he would have been compelled to act less boorishly, but his wealth and position had so far saved him from being forcibly made to understand that good manners were as essential and necessary to men in his position as to those who were less fortunate in a worldly point of view.

Naturally brusque and rude, he was also utterly indifferent and callous to the feelings and sufferings of others, and his uninterrupted career of success thus far had confirmed him in these habits.

One rainy evening, two gentlemen hurried into the Lochibar Hotel, in the office of which stood Questor, serenely smoking and looking as profoundly wise as usual, while, with a patronizing air, he listened to the conversation of several prominent politicians.

"I would like to see you for a few minutes on important business," said the spokesman of the party which had just entered the hotel.

As he hurriedly whispered these words to Questor, the latter, with his usual imperturbable manner, calmly knocked the ashes from his cigar and quietly remarked, "Why, what's up? You appear to be excited."

"Well, I have good reason to be" said the new comer, as he placed his arm in that of Questor, and drew him away from his companions. "I have just returned from M—, and K—'s attorney says if the old man don't get him a pardon he'll make it hot for us."

"The d——l you say," exclaimed Questor, as he toyed uneasily with his umbrella. "We had better call up and see Malcolm at once. If this matter should get out just now it would knock his senatorial prospects into a cocked hat. Let us go up and see him."

Speaking a few hurried words to their companions, the two men linked arms and hurried up to Conyngham's.

As they entered the library, they found that gentleman sitting smoking by a cheerful grate fire, and, as customary, he looked up with an annoyed and provoked expression at their entrance.

Questor, knowing well his master's disposition, without further preliminary remarks, made known the object of their errand.

As he finished speaking, Conyngham merely remarked, "Is that all? Why, there is nothing in that to be alarmed at, that I can see."

"I don't know about that," said Questor, thoughtfully. "People just now are in a very bad humor at the way things have been going for some time, and if Keith has any evidence which would in the slightest degree connect us with them in the last gubernatorial campaign, and if the people hear it"—

"Well, d——n it," broke in Conyngham, angrily, "if the people do hear it, what in the d——l are they going to do about it?"

This settled the matter as it always did.

The next morning, by Conyngham's instructions, the oracle of the Ring came out and boldly announced, in large head-lines, that the murderer Keith, in order to procure a pardon and save his neck, had threatened to drag Hausenplooze in as *particeps criminis* in some of his nefarious work in the coal regions.

The very audacity of the thing took the people entirely by surprise, and while no intelligent person throughout the State doubted for a moment that the Conyngham Ring had had some arrangement with the leaders of this band of Thugs, in order to control their votes during the campaign,

yet as Conyngham had so often insolently and defiantly replied to remonstrances of the people, "What are you going to do about it?"—so it was in this case.

How many additional murders and outrages, that were committed by these wretches, owed their origin to the encouragement given by, and political affiliation with, the leading officials of the State, no one will ever know.

It was a long time before the President would permit the Conynghams to have any influence with his administration.

Their insolent arrogance, and generally unsavory reputation had prejudiced him violently against them; and, notwithstanding his well-known weakness for very rich men and the blandishments and arts employed by the Conynghams to win his favor, it was not until the General began to scheme for a third time, that he succumbed to the Conyngham influence, and reluctantly gave to the younger Conyngham a position in his cabinet in order to conciliate them, and to secure the State they controlled in his favor.

Young Conyngham's power was now undisputed, and he reigned supreme throughout the State, controlling everything, and ruling everybody with an iron hand.

The people were but clay in the hands of the potter, and mere ciphers in government affairs.

While they went through the farce of holding elections, Conyngham had everything arranged months before to suit himself, and his corrupt tools occupied every position of influence and profit throughout the State.

These rascals, when caught up and exposed in their attempts to steal millions from the state treasury, under the supervision of their master and the thin guise of securing appropriations for laudable purposes, were allowed

to pursue unmolested their nefarious schemes of self-aggrandisement.

On one occasion, owing to the vigilance, fearlessness, and honesty of one man, their rascality was fully exposed ; and their bare-faced attempts to bribe some members of the legislature, brought to light.

They were indicted, tried, and sentenced before an upright judge ; but, through the influence Conyngham brought to bear upon the board of pardons and a facile governor, these stealers of millions of dollars from the public treasury were allowed to go free, and instead of wearing the garb of convicts and looking through prison bars, as they deserved, they were congratulated on their lucky escape ; and, after being feted and flattered, left for their homes in parlor cars, surrounded by rejoicing friends.

When asked by the latter if they were not afraid of the people, amidst their bumpers of champagne they laughingly replied, "Lord, no ! As long we have Conyngham with us, what are they going to do about it ?"

A few days afterwards, two poor men, with large families dependent on them for a living, were sentenced to the penitentiary for *eight years* for stealing ninety dollars between them.

Not belonging to the Ring or being of any political service to it, there will be no question as to their serving out the full length of their term.

What a commentary on justice under the corporation-Conyngham rule !

Is it not abominable that these men, instead of watching over the affairs of the State, encouraging commerce, and instructing the people in the principles of liberty, and giving good examples, should reduce us to such a condition.

The greatest tyrant in English history never excelled young Conyngham at this time in the exercise of a brutal lust for power. An able historian says, "In the eyes of George III. the righteous anger of the people was only another form of disloyalty. Intent, heart and soul, in his favorite scheme for establishing a system of personal rule, under which all the threads of administration should center in the royal closet, he entertained an instinctive antipathy to high-minded and independent men of all political parties. He selected his instruments amongst those who were willing to be subservient because they had no self-respect to lose."

"His majesty," wrote Burke, "never was in better spirits. He has got a ministry weak and dependent, and, what is better, willing to continue so. Serenely satisfied with his success in weeding out of the government everybody whom the nation trusted and esteemed, he felt it an insult to himself that his subjects should murmur when they saw honest and patriotic statesmen forbidden to devote their talents to the service of the public, while the prosperity and honor of the country were committed to the charge of men, not one of whom any private person in his senses would choose as a steward, or receive as a son-in-law."

Compare this description with that of Conyngham at this time, and one cannot but be surprised at the wonderful resemblance.

The elevation of such a man to power, is but one of the inevitable results of the debasing rule of monopoly, and a natural outgrowth of the spoils system, which has so demoralized public sentiment that it now recognizes the dollar as king, and worships the golden calf as the symbol of power, and object of public idolatry.

When the President visited one of our large cities, he

became so disgusted with the coarse orgies of Conyngham's venal horde of office-holders and office-seekers, that on one occasion, at a public dinner given by these men in his honor, he turned on his heel and left the room in utter disgust, and, to the alarm and dismay of Conyngham, without exchanging a word with, or tasting a single viand of, his would-be hosts.

At another time, a magnificent public reception was given him by these same men, amidst the glare of thousands of gas jets, splendid music, and all the costly accessories that money could command. The box occupied by Conyngham and his family, was the cynosure of all eyes; and by the strange irony of fate, here beside him, robed in all the dignity and grandeur of a city father, stood a successful pawnbroker, representing the power, the wealth, and the refinement of a great city.

Here stood the two worthy representatives of political corruption, and the worship of Mammon. The national government represented by a successful note-shaver, under the pseudo patronymic of national banker, and the municipal government by a successful pawnbroker — by the king of the six gilt balls, and the king of the three gilt balls?

Let us cover our faces, and "ring down the curtain."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE TIDE TURNS.

WHEN the time arrived for the nomination of another president, like a feudal baron of old gathering his horde of corrupt office-holders and petty bosses, Conyngham marched boldly into the presidential convention, and, in conjunction with an insolent boss like himself from a neighboring State, he endeavored, and once more succeeded in defeating the plainly expressed will of the people by forcing upon them the nomination of a man for the presidency, of whom the people knew little or nothing, as against their chosen leader.

The secret of the opposition to the latter gentleman on the part of Conyngham and his fellow boss, was owing to the fact that they could not use him, and to a mean and unmanly jealousy of his brilliant talents and popularity, which brought into vivid relief, and in a way not at all flattering to their vanity their own shallow pretentiousness and unworthiness.

Here, in endeavoring to force the iniquitous unit rule, he, for the first time in his public career, received a severe check, and a forcible reminder of the fact that the people were beginning to awaken from their past degradation.

If he had been wise, he would have now paused, and henceforth modified his domineering and insolent pretensions ; but, completely intoxicated with power and success, he deemed himself invincible, and with a singular short-

sightedness he sought to revenge this insubordination in the party by wielding the lash most unmercifully on all who had opposed him. And thus, in his blind infatuation, commenced with his own hands to dig his future political grave.

To the great amusement of the people, and the bitter chagrin of Conyngham and his fellow-boss, the President, after his election, utterly refused to recognize their claims on his administration.

In vain the neighboring boss sulked, and stood on his dignity, while young Conyngham and old Conyngham in turn beseeched, and swore around the White House.

It was all to no purpose.

After all his treachery and intriguing, Malcolm now saw slip through his grasp the control of the United States treasury, the ambition of his life. Once in possession of the money bags of the nation, then, and only then, would the insatiate greed of his avaricious and sordid soul be satisfied.

In his desperation he sent for his private legislature to meet him in the capital, and like the obedient spaniels, they were, they came at their master's bidding, each one wearing his master's collar, and with them at his back he besieged the President day and night, only to be calmly yet firmly refused.

While listening respectfully to their clamors, the President firmly declined to even think for a moment of placing a man so notoriously corrupt and venal at the head of the finances of the nation.

Conyngham's prestige was now seriously damaged. He had not proven as cunning and as far-seeing as his father, or else the times had changed, and the day for the successful accomplishment of big political results by

the peculiar method of the Conynghams was passing away.

For several years the young man was compelled to remain in humiliating obscurity.

The elder Conyngham then endeavored to obtain an important foreign mission, in order that the son might succeed his father in the senate; but in this direction they were also most ignominiously snubbed, to the great delight of every independent man in the country.

The people chuckled good-humoredly over it, and were so delighted with the course of the new president, so far as his treatment of the Conynghams was concerned, that they were content to receive but little notice and few favors from the administration, so long as the Conyngham ambition was kept within bounds. The only comforting reflection the old General now had, was from the fact that when both had been in power, during the former administration, they had succeeded in having expunged from the congressional record the resolution of censure which had been passed by Congress upon him for indulging too freely in practices which would not be approved of by strictly honest, business men at any time, but much less when his country was engaged in a desperate struggle for existence.

Growing old, and feeling his power fast waning, Senator Conyngham reluctantly relaxed his grasp on politics, and resigned into the hands of his son the reigns of government, as one would a piece of private property, without consulting the people, or paying even the slightest regard to their wishes. And since that time his sole pleasure has consisted in training his son in the ambitious career he had marked out for him, and in amusing himself and his

enemies by inditing senile and bombastic effusions to the press.

The General firmly believed, and vainly endeavored to convince the people, that his success in life had been achieved solely by his own unaided talents and a strict observance of the Ten Commandments, united with a stern determination to have no affiliations whatever with "those d——d literary fellows," and he finally wound up his career of a half century of scheming, sordid self-seeking, criminal venality and political debauchery, by getting entangled in the toils of a crafty and scheming widow, who, like himself, knew when and how to take advantage of the weak and the foolish.

This affair finally lead to a breach-of-promise suit, a suit so ridiculous considering the antics of the amorous old swain, as to convulse the whole country.

His last appearance in public life was hurrying away from his hotel table with his coat pockets full of oranges for his inamorata.

Shades of Webster, Clay, and Calhoun, Sumner and Lincoln! What must have been your emotion, in thus witnessing your worthy successor stealing away from the table d'hote, his tall figure bent with age and oranges, as he hastens to his *dulcinea*!

The aged and retired statesman presents a venerable picture as he sits in his luxurious and well-appointed library, while pondering over the great problems of government and devising schemes, for the benefit of posterity, in the fast fading twilight.

"Yes, Sammy," he exclaims, addressing his private secretary, "Cicero was right when he warned men to 'beavare of the vidders.'"

"General, what became of that troublesome woman who bothered us so?"

"Pish! Sammy, never mind that," the general replied testily; "that were past. Don't mention it again. By the by, Sammy, I have mislaid or lost one of my most valuable works."

"Do you remember the title of it, General?" quickly replied his secretary.

"I disremember exactly, but it was either Washington's Life of Irving, or Irving's Life of Washington. I forget which. But it is no matter. I will wile away the evening by reading Dickens' *Elegy on a Graveyard*. That kind of reading always rests me after the heavier works of Mark Twain and Nicholas Nickleby."

At the last National convention in which Conyngham and his fellow boss figured conspicuously, they again attempted to ignore the wishes of the people. And the spectacle of these two insolent political bosses attempting, and almost succeeding in controlling a national convention by the revival of the third-term principle in the face of the unwritten law of the Republic, was a scene well calculated to excite alarm in the minds of thoughtful men, as to the future of the country.

Malcolm Conyngham here showed up his utter moral and intellectual insignificance. He was entirely out of place and his vulgar buying up of the negro delegates, and his flattering of them by eating at the same table, while it went a great way towards the nominating of his favorite, yet it did not fail to disgust the whole country, and gave the people a very good idea of the mental calibre and character of this would-be statesman.

Our political system of sending shop-keepers to Congress is not calculated to develop statesmen.

The unit rule was here again attempted as at the previous convention. But the leaven had been working ever since, and he was sat down upon without ceremony, and his favorite was defeated.

He came back mortified, completely squelched, and a badly-whipped man.

Retiring to a watering place during the summer, he sulked like some schoolboy, until, coaxed and cajoled by his father and the leaders of the party, he was finally persuaded to take an active part in the campaign.

But his whole course had been so undignified, unmanly, and showed such a lack of brains and judgment, that he now lost nearly all the influence his father had succeeded in placing in his hands. If his party had been defeated here his fate would have been sealed, and the people of his State would have been no longer tyrannized over and scourged by the Conyngham family. And thus was here delayed the final overthrow of a family who had for many years, with the assistance of monopolies and the cunning manipulation of the spoils system, continued to fatten and flourish on their ill-gotten power. And in reply to the indignant remonstrances of the people, they still answer, in tones, not quite, but almost as insolently defiant as ever, "What are you going to do about it?"

"The mills of the gods grind slowly, but they grind exceeding fine."

In Gulliver's "Voyage to the Flying Island," the story is told of a great court lady, very beautiful, loved by the handsomest of men, who yet flies from her home to go and live with a deformed footman. She is stripped and beaten. She sinks into deeper degradation from day to day, but

she likes her shame and declines to be torn from her worthless lover.

That story returns to my thoughts whenever I see our country attentively listening to the editorials of the *Republican* and the *Telegraph*, and seeking to read her destiny in the responses of these oracles.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE GLITTERING SERPENT.

CONYNGHAM's faults were selfishness, avarice, inordinate ambition, and a total disregard for the feelings and interests of others, when they conflicted with his own.

He was not insensible to the power of female beauty, nor averse to excess in wine, yet neither wine nor beauty could ever seduce the cautious and frugal libertine, even in his earliest youth, into one fit of indiscreet generosity.

Plunging into the giddy whirl of Washington society, he now quickly threw off the mask of morality he had hitherto worn, and indulged in all kinds of dissipation. He was as cool, calculating, and systematic, in his vices, as in his financial and political affairs, and avoided excess when it interfered with either his ambition or his health. But here in the social, as in the political world, it was only a question of time with this schemer, as to all schemers, how soon he should over-reach himself.

Louise Renshaw's husband was a very wealthy manufacturer. During the winter it had been customary with him to rent a handsome establishment in Washington, where his large means and great business prominence would have given him the *entrée* to the fashionable world, independent of the fact that his father was a prominent senator, and his mother one of the leaders, if not the leader, of fashionable society at the capital.

Here they spent their winters delightfully, amidst balls, receptions, and brilliant parties, and no one gave more

lavish and elegant entertainments than Mrs. Henry Renshaw.

In this gay world, the wonderful social tact of Louise Renshaw, *née* Emory, and her knowledge of fashionable society, soon caused her to be recognized as the social queen.

Malcolm Conyngham when wearied with the distractions and intrigues of political life, always found at the Renshaw's that tranquility of mind that was denied him elsewhere, and a warm welcome, and the delightful society of an intellectual and fascinating woman of the world, — one who was thoroughly versed in its ways, and not averse to taking an active part in social and political scheming, so common at the capital.

Here Conyngham had been received and placed on the dangerous footing of an intimate friend.

No more kind and indulgent husband lived than Henry Renshaw, and he desired to see, this brilliant wife, of whom he was so proud, have every wish gratified, and in her ambition to be considered the queen of society, he assisted her in every way possible.

To see her happy was an all-sufficient recompense for the almost criminal expenditure of money, which had cost him years of ceaseless business turmoil to accumulate.

Mr. Renshaw was not naturally of either a suspicious or jealous nature, and so firm was his faith and belief in the loyalty of his wife, that never, even for a moment, had he given any consideration whatever to a fact which was of late becoming apparent to others, that Conyngham's growing intimacy and constant attentions to his wife were of such a character as to be the subject of remark. And while their actions could not be called imprudent, they were certainly very indiscreet for married people to indulge in.

Some of these rumors had reached Mr. Renshaw, but he had paid no attention to them until one evening, at a reception given by the Secretary of State, as he sat partially concealed by heavy lace curtains, he overheard some fragmentary conversation between his wife and Conyngham which, for the first time, rendered him uneasy as to the relations existing between his wife and their friend.

The two conversed freely without a thought of being overheard by any one, least of all by the husband.

"You know I look upon you as the hostess, and your husband an unfortunate appendage," Conyngham half jokingly remarked, and added, "but you know he must be endured for the exquisite pleasure of your society. Surely when Mr. Renshaw's time is altogether absorbed in business he cannot complain if you choose to enjoy yourself in the society of an old friend. You give the supper and I will see that the parties will all be there."

"But I must consult my husband first and see if these people would be agreeable to him, Mr. Conyngham," she replied hesitatingly.

"That is perfectly right," exclaimed Conyngham, playfully. "You are right in consulting him in everything, but remember, at the same time, that I am your friend, too; and I beg you to allow me to continue in my present task of advising you, in some things at least. And now for once exercise your own free will, and give this party for my sake. Be mistress of your own household for once. You surely need not ask your husband about so trifling a matter as this. Do you understand me?"

"Yes," replied Louise, flattered, but inwardly frightened at Conyngham's increasing warmth of manner, and the meaning glances which accompanied his remarks.

But by his skilful manipulations and subtile flattery, he

had of late completely regained his old power over her, and alas! had rekindled a love that to indulge in now was criminal, yet for a month back these two had been thus dangerously skating over thin ice. And while neither had acted imprudently, each day saw them becoming more and more enamored and infatuated with one another.

The woman had always fascinated him, and her intelligence and knowledge of society and the world, had already been of great service to him, and of late she had become almost necessary to his comfort and happiness, until, utterly regardless of the criminality of his course, he allowed no opportunity to pass without endeavoring, in every way possible, to alienate this wife from a fond husband, and bring shame and disgrace upon them and their children.

"When can you give this party? Let me see, — to-day is Thursday," — he said, musingly.

"Will next Tuesday do?" she asked, as, under his ardent glances, she blushed like a girl, and felt half ashamed and half elated at the unmistakable admiration betrayed in Conyngham's manner towards her.

"Yes. Tuesday will do," he said, quietly; "but I would not mention a word to your husband about the party. With his old-fashioned notions of propriety he might object, and then our evening would be spoiled."

As Mr. Renshaw noticed his wife's flushed face, and her eyes growing softer, darker, and more humid, there was a deep wound in his heart. But he would not acknowledge, even to himself, that his wife had been guilty of anything more than a foolish indiscretion. Yet the wound was all the same, and he was like one beginning to stir in an uneasy dream, dimly conscious of an impending trouble on awakening.

Meeting his wife shortly after, he laid his hand upon her shoulder, and sighed deeply.

"Why do you sigh in that manner," she hastily asked; "you are surely not wearied by society so soon, are you?"

"Did I sigh? Perhaps I am tired," he answered, patiently.

"Well, if you are bored you need not look as if the party were such a terrible infliction," she said, impatiently.

A guilty conscience had rendered her uneasy, and under his calm, yet penetrating glances, she feared this feeling might betray itself in her manner.

She was a little flattered, as is natural when a wife has been receiving praises and assurances of friendship and sympathy, mingled with sentiment, in one sweet, dangerous draft, from one other than her husband.

On the way home, Mr. Renshaw's averted glances and unusually abstracted manner, created in her mind a vague feeling of uneasiness and alarm, which so worked upon the wife's fears that she at once made up her mind to pursue a straight course, and ask her husband's approval of the party she desired to give on Conyngham's account the following week.

This was not a pleasant task, as she knew that this arrangement to have persons partaking of their hospitality of whom her husband or herself knew very little, could but be unpleasant to him, and might possibly offend him.

"Henry," she said, when alone in their room, the day following the reception, while she was dressing for dinner, "we ought to entertain Malcolm Conyngham and his wife soon."

"I suppose we ought," he replied, with an involuntary sigh. His heart ached at the sound of Conyngham's

name, but he could not acknowledge it to himself as he moved uneasily in his chair.

"We have never entertained them yet, and of course we have to have them some time," she said.

"When do you wish to have them?" asked the husband, moodily.

"On Tuesday," said Louise.

How her heart beat!

She knew that her husband was to be away early in the week, and she had counted on Tuesday as one of the days on which he would be absent.

"I cannot be here on Tuesday, as I leave on Monday morning for New York, and will not likely return before Wednesday. Who else do you intend having besides Conyngham and his wife?"

She looked embarrassed while endeavoring to calm her nervous apprehension. She well knew the parties she desired to invite to her supper, at Conyngham's request, were persons to whom her husband had frequently referred, and spoken of in undisguised tones of contempt and disapproval, and she dreaded the mentioning of their names for fear of arousing a temper naturally quick, but well under control.

She had seen her husband angry several times and had not forgotten how unpleasant it was.

Like all scheming and intriguing people she was timid, and hated scenes.

"If you have no objections, I intend to ask Mr. Gray, and also Colonel Forrester and his lady, and the two Misses Arnold."

To her surprise, her husband, without showing a particle of annoyance at the strange request she had made of him, calmly consented to allow her to entertain, in his own

home, a notorious male and female lobbyist, and a gentleman and two young ladies, who, while they mingled in the best of Washington society, yet had always been considered as the leaders of a rather fast set, and with whom very few prudent mothers would have cared to see their daughters intimately associate.

"Can't you possibly postpone your business until Wednesday," she asked, in the most innocent manner possible.

Mr. Renshaw looked up at her for the first time searchingly, as he said to himself, "Can it be possible she has already grown to be such an adept in dissembling?"

"I have never broken a business engagement yet, and should scarcely like to do it now, for no better reason than this. Why can you not postpone your supper party until some other evening?" said he, as they descended to the dining-room, and sat down to dinner.

"I would, but Mr. Conyngham cannot come any other evening in the week."

"In that case it had better not be at all," said her husband, coldly. "Ask the rest on some other evening, and let Mr. Conyngham come when he can."

"I think you might consider what is due to a senator and a gentleman," answered his wife, rather indignantly.

Mr. Renshaw answered very gravely, "As a senator, Mr. Conyngham stands nowhere with me. You know that as well as I do. As a neighbor, and an old friend of yours only, is he recognized in this house. In fact, I never admired the gentleman very much, and would prefer that he would stay away altogether."

Louise, flushed and angry, quickly replied, "As mistress of the house, my wishes, I am sure, are entitled to some consideration, and I ask that my friend be treated when here as a gentlemen should be. Several times lately I

have noticed that you have not treated him with the courtesy due to a guest. If you are not friendly disposed towards him, you might, at least, be polite to him on my account. If however, you object to my having my own way with this party, I will give it up at once. But I do think I have a right to my own way in such things."

"You have a right to your own way, and have never been refused when you have asked for it," said Mr. Renshaw, calmly.

"You give me my own way when I ask for it. You are certainly very generous," replied his wife with a sneer.

"I try to be generous," said Mr. Renshaw, gently. "Can you not defer this party till I come home again?" he asked, pleasantly.

"I cannot," she replied. "Mr. Conyngham fixed Tuesday, and I cannot change it now."

"It was unnecessary to ask my consent if you and he have already arranged it," said Renshaw, angrily.

"I do not think I did ask your consent," said Louise, quickly.

"What did you ask then?" he retorted, endeavoring to smile.

"I think I only told you of the fact," she answered with dignity; "and I think I have the right to ask my best friend to my house when and how I please, without the consent of my husband."

"All right," he said after a troubled pause. "If it please you to ask this man whom you call your best friend, then do so. You have a right to do as you will in this house. This supper party is not your will, but Malcolm Conyngham's, and to this I do not feel disposed to submit."

"You might this once, Henry," his wife replied, in her old, caressing tone and manner.

"No. I will not," he answered gravely. "I am determined not to gratify the whim of a man I dislike, and who has been the occasion of the only serious dissension we have had during our married life; and I must emphatically forbid your giving this party during my absence." And rising from the table Mr. Renshaw walked sadly into the parlor, where, throwing himself on a lounge, he gave himself up to anxious reflections as to the future.

Unable to remain quiet, he arose and walked to the window.

It was a very little matter, this supper party, but under the circumstances it seemed to him a serious and threatening one.

His wife followed him penitently, and as she stood beside him said, "I would not have insisted on the party, Henry, but the invitations are all now sent out, and if you disturb the arrangements you will put a public affront on me, and I know you do not desire to do that,—do you?"

He looked down into her face with an expression she never afterwards forgot, full of sadness and mournful tenderness as he wearily said, "Well, have your party. We are not going to quarrel about Mr. Conyngham. He is not worth quarreling about."

Now that she had accomplished her purpose she was sincerely sorry.

She had once loved her husband passionately, before this man Conyngham had, for the second time, crossed her unfortunate path, like the glittering serpent he was!

CHAPTER XXXIX.

IN THE TOILS.

ON the eventful evening of the party, Louise surpassed herself in beauty of person and elegance of dress. She had never arrayed herself with such a prodigality of wealth, and never looked so handsome. Her dress was rose-colored satin, the palest shade of that beautiful tint, with plenty of fine old lace. The diamonds in her dark hair and around her neck, while flashing and sparkling brilliantly, brightened and enlivened her costume, charmingly bringing into relief the patrician and refined face of the wearer.

She did not look more than twenty-five, although well in her thirties, as she received her guests with a sweet smile and high-bred courtesy. She was an unusually attractive woman, with her beautifully rounded arms, and her softly moulded figure that had bloomed into generous maturity without losing its grace.

Her shoulders were models, and more exquisitely graceful and polished in their outlines than when younger. She was the very ideal of a lovely woman in her prime, and had wonderfully improved since her girlhood, and possessed nearly every quality which men most admire.

But she had no reasoning faculty, and was a woman of strong passions. Love was her ruling passion ; and, alas ! she found that another could better awaken it, than could her husband.

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All evening she was radiant with excitement, and her imagination was at fever heat.

Malcolm Conyngham made his appearance early in the evening, unaccompanied by his wife, and in a calm and unconcerned manner he complimented her in low tones, and flattered her as usual, causing her heart to flutter in a way that no married woman's heart ever should flutter.

He asked her, in significant tones, if she expected Mr. Renshaw home that night.

At the mention of her husband's name, Louise glanced quickly towards the door, with a startled expression, as she answered, "He will not be home until to-morrow evening."

"I am glad of it," he said as he pressed her hand more warmly than was necessary, and then crossed over the room to speak to Colonel Forrester and his lady, in order to further some political scheme he had in view, and for which purpose, as well as to enjoy the society of Mrs. Renshaw unmolested for one evening, he had planned this party.

The supper was a lively and gay one, very much more so than those over which Mrs. Renshaw generally presided; and if some of the strict social proprieties were overlooked, these omissions were more than compensated for by the hilarious mirth and reckless jollity which prevailed throughout the evening.

With eyes flashing with the fever of love, and fired by wine, Louise Renshaw was more brilliant than any one could have imagined so dignified a person could be. She was radiant and happy, and everything around her offered up incense at her shrine.

She was praised and flattered and loved by one of the most prominent and distinguished men in the capital, and

as intrigue was her element, she was supremely happy to-night.

It had been so long since these latent and dormant elements of the false side of her character had been allowed full play, that the very novelty of this sensation, and the spice of danger, caused her to more keenly enjoy than ever the gratification of her morbid nature.

It was quite late when all but Conyngham, after warmly thanking their hostess for so pleasant an evening, had retired.

The gentlemen and one of the ladies, much to the amusement of the servants, had considerable difficulty, in the midst of their profuse and maudlin adieus to make their way to their carriages ; and, in fact, one of the gentlemen, to the mortification of the old family colored man and the amusement of the rest of the party, required personal assistance from the former, who, feeling outraged at such unusual and undignified performances, especially during his master's absence, hurried the inebriated guest to the carriage, and seated him with an energy more forcible than polite.

As Louise and Conyngham returned to the parlor the lights had been turned down, and the twilight was a pleasant relief, after the glare and bustle of the evening. The servants had retired, and as he led her into the room, and sat by her as he had done ten years before, she looked down timidly, and he could see her hands tremble and her delicate lips twitch nervously.

She was evidently frightened at her position.

"I know how much you love your husband, Louise," said Conyngham in the most frank and innocent way possible, and at the same time in his most insidious manner, and with glances whose meaning no woman could mistake.

"I used to love him," said Louise ; "but he is so absorbed of late in his business affairs, and is so impatient and rude at times, that I no longer feel the same affection towards him that I used to."

"I know and sympathize with you Louise, and can easily understand how unsatisfying would be the cold, measured affections of a man whose whole mind is intent on the rise and fall of merchandise and the petty details of business, as to leave no room for any other emotions, while leaving a warm, passionate heart like your own at home to fill the empty void as best you may."

He spoke in the softest of moods, and in low, tender, and confidential tones ; and, as he took her unresisting hand in his own, while placing his arm around her, she crimsoned as she replied, "I used to love Henry like—like —" and looking up into Conyngham's face there was a look in his eyes which made her drop her own shamed face to the floor.

"I love you very much, Louise," he said tenderly.

She clung to him confidingly as she asked, "Do you, Malcolm?"

He stooped and kissed her passionately.

O, if she could have seen and understood the look which blazed from Conyngham's steel-gray eyes, and which almost scorched her in its fierce glare, and all the cruelty that lay behind that look, it would have filled her with terror and dread.

As Conyngham left the house, a carriage drove up to the door, and Mr. Renshaw quickly alighted in time to exchange salutations with him.

Bidding each other good-night each went his way.

The latter little suspected that from that evening, hence

forth, the old and honorable name of the Renshaws would become to himself and his children, a by-word of humiliation or reproach, instead of an honor and pride, as it had been from the days his sturdy Puritan ancestors had landed, that cold, bleak, wintry morning, on the rock-bound coast of New England.

CHAPTER XL.

AN IGNOMINIOUS FLIGHT.

GRADUALLY Henry Renshaw became aware of the change in the manner of his wife towards him. She was colder and more discontented than he had ever known her.

He attributed it all to temporary indisposition and dullness of spirits. She became more petulant and fault-finding.

Conyngham's visits increased to such an extent at last that even Renshaw's unsuspecting nature was aroused, and calling her into his library one evening, he said to her firmly, and with a metallic ring in his tones, — the import of which his wife instinctively knew, and which filled the mind of the agitated woman with the utmost alarm, — "Louise, you must forget all this folly this scoundrel Conyngham has so artfully led you into. I do not wish to be either harsh or tyrannical, but I cannot stand by and see you approach moral and social suicide, and make my name a word of contempt in society, for the sake of gratifying the devilish pride of a treacherous sneak. Now, for my sake and your own, promise to cut this man hereafter. I know you have been indiscreet, and perhaps imprudent, but criminal, never. I have too much faith in you to ever believe that."

Her conscience smote her fiercely, and in that moment she realized to the full extent the great wrong she had done to one of the noblest of husbands.

She hid her face in her hands, and burst into tears. He took her to him and kissed her with affection and tenderness.

But the sweet caress did not awaken in her the joy she had once felt, and she now simply endured it as penance for the misery she had wrought.

"We are both so changed, Henry, of late," she said, while almost involuntarily withdrawing from his embrace, "that I am afraid we can never love each other as we used to, and I fear our whole lives must now be different."

Renshaw suddenly turned to his wife like a flash, and unable any longer to control his temper, he cried fiercely, as he placed his hand on her shoulder with a grip that made her almost scream out with pain and terror, "Tell me,—and mark me, no lie, or I will kill you in an instant,—has this affair of yours and Conyngham's been carried to a serious extent?"

As he said the last words he lowered his head, and glared into her face like a madman, and his hot breath, which came quick and fast, fairly scorched her.

Obtaining no reply, he clutched the miserable woman by the throat, and forced her on her knees. While insane with rage and jealousy, he choked her until her eyes started from their sockets, and her face became black with strangulation. As she hung limp and almost lifeless, all was silent as death.

It was a terrible moment. Murder and revenge were plainly written on the enraged husband's terribly cruel and inexorably set face, and the relentless tiger-look was as immovable and fixed as that of a fiend, and almost paralyzed the terror-stricken and half dead woman. Nothing but the fierce, short breathing of suppressed rage of

the husband, and the choking gasps of the almost dying wife, disturbed the awful stillness of the room.

Slightly relaxing his iron grasp on the almost unconscious woman, he hissed in her ear, "Speak! Speak quick! — for your life! Answer me. No lies. Yes, or no?"

Reading her fate in the unpitying glare of those murderous eyes if she did not tell the truth, with an almost superhuman effort she slowly shook her head in the negative, and murmured, "Never!"

"Thank God! Thank God! it has not gone that far," cried the unhappy man, as he slowly raised the limp form of his wife, and placed her on a lounge. Then he paced the room, completely unnerved and almost distracted.

"My God! My God!" he said, "this is dreadful! terrible! If this goes on much longer I will go mad! It will kill me," he cried, as his whole frame shook with convulsive sobs, while his wife looked on awe-stricken at the terrible work she had made of their mutual happiness.

"And this is the wife whom I so tenderly loved! and so implicitly believed in," he cried out, in heart-broken tones.

Gradually becoming calm, he sat down by his wife, and, taking her cold hand in his own, he said in strangely calm and saddened tones, while steadying his voice as best he could, but which shook and broke in spite of all his efforts, "You once loved me, Louise; and how could you let this scoundrel come in between us. You surely will not despoil me to gratify this villain. Before it is too late come back to me, my wife. Come back to your husband and your children. Come back before you have broken my heart, and fallen from your own high estate."

"No," she exclaimed coldly, "we can never be to each other what we once were. I have told you to-day that

nothing criminal has ever passed between Conyngham and myself, but I now confess to you that I no longer love you as I once did ; and henceforth, — though, for our children's sake and for our own pride, if you so desire it, we may live together, — my love for you is dead. It is too late now, too late !” and with a sigh as deep and as sad as his own over their ruined happiness and desolated home, she left the room.

As the broken-hearted man sat there, amidst the shattered idols of his household, with despair in his heart, the door-bell rang, and at the sound of Conyngham's hated voice, the man who had robbed him of all that man holds most dear, — his wife's love, and his own and his children's honor, — the proud man became almost stifled with rage. He advanced to the door and intercepted Conyngham who was half way in the room.

Renshaw's whole life had been marked by great moderation and self-control, but he was a man of powerful passions, and those who could have read his heart at that moment, would have shrank back appalled at the depth of hatred and hell which raged within, at the sight of his cowardly and triumphant foe, who had stridden into his house as if monarch of all he surveyed.

Nothing but the long-footed habit of self-control and the self-respect of a gentleman, kept him from taking the lordly-insolent and smooth-tongued intruder by the throat, and strangling the life out of him.

The husband stood there for a moment, struggling with his murderous passion and his shame.

Why should he not kill this man as he would have crushed a serpent coiled to spring?

Silent, his broad chest heaving, and his hands clenched,

his lips compressed to a bloodless line, his eyes glaring, he stood, the image of rage and despair.

As he made a step towards the cowardly creature, who had stood transfixed with fear and horror at the terrible apparition of the outraged and avenging husband, the former turned quickly on his heel, and made a precipitate and undignified retreat, nor paused in his ignominious flight till he safely reached his home.

There have been wicked men than Conyngham, but never one who covered his wickedness with more meanness and cowardice. While he had not been criminal, yet to gratify an insane desire, he, in every way possible by words and actions, gave coloring to the gossip and stories which were whispered, with nods and winks, from one end of the capital to the other, and gloried in the notoriety which fed his morbid vanity.

One word from him, or a change in his conduct, would have given the lie to the brutal scandals; but the poor, vain creature delighted, nay reveled in his shame, and sneered at the ruin he had wrought in a once happy household.

To have it said that he had fascinated such a brilliant woman of the world, such a queen of society, filled this creature with delight, and he hastened to affirm, through his conduct, all that had been hinted or charged.

To add to Mr. Renshaw's domestic troubles, his business became involved, and, harassed, broken-hearted, and separated from wife and children, he dragged a miserable existence worse than death.

His wife, forsaken and alone, wanders like Hagar in the wilderness, a prey to her own miserable grief.

Will a nation of pure and happy homes return this class of men to the national councils there to be the protectors

and the arbitrators of our gravest interests, domestic and otherwise? Can the people, and will the people, return such insolent and unscrupulous men to power? Can the churches keep quiet? One would think that every Christian minister would raise his voice in virtuous indignation, and cry out in horror and shame, "No, no! never as long as we have sons and daughters, wives and mothers, shall we disgrace our manhood by allowing these men to reign over us," and truly and earnestly ask, WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?

CHAPTER XLI.

THE JUST MADE PERFECT.

WAS Emily Conyngham *née* Charlton, happy, surrounded by all the wealth and flattery of which, as the wife of Senator Conyngham, she now became the recipient? The latter's love for her during their married life had been meted out to her in the same cold, calculating spirit which marked every transaction of his sordid and selfish career.

However improbable as it may seem, with the knowledge even of her husband's inconstancy, her shallow, thoughtless nature suffered but a passing pang of mortified pride, soon to be forgotten in the midst of the giddy whirl of that fashionable society to which she had become a devoted slave.

Much to the disappointment of her early friends, as Mrs. Senator Conyngham, she had developed into a silly, childishly vain, and frivolous woman ; and, as Larry Hamilton had correctly surmised, her undivided time and attention were entirely given to the adornment of her person and the acquiring of silly airs and graces, and to the preservation of her fast-waning personal charms.

Emily had matured early, and her mental growth had ceased with her physical, and at thirty-five she was as vain and thoughtless as the veriest Miss in her teens. But the silly affectation and ridiculous little airs and vanities which can be tolerated, and are even charming in a fresh, and beautiful young girl, only serve to make middle-

aged, married women ridiculous. Every premonition of approaching age almost rendered her frantic, and for a while she affected the company of very young people, hoping thereby to retain the semblance of youthfulness — and probably, too, for the reason that her own mental shallowness and frivolity rendered thoughtful company distasteful to her.

The gratification of her insane vanity became in time with her almost a monomania, and to such an extent was this carried, and so jealous did she finally become, that the praise of a younger and prettier woman rendered her miserable.

Her time was spent in discussing the details of dress with milliners and dressmakers, while her conversation consisted and abounded in nothing but the tittle-tattle of society, and the beauties of the last new bonnet. She soon became a mere idle woman of fashion, whose whole ambition in life was to be the leader of a little clique of persons, as light, trifling, and frivolous as herself, with no deep affections or cravings for anything better or higher. With all her wishes and desires in this respect gratified, she was perfectly contented and happy, so long as no woman was better dressed, or more highly praised, than herself.

Ralph Adair—good, honest, manly Ralph—is now Judge Adair; the husband of a noble woman, who, in addition to her many other charms, adds that of a single-minded love and devotion for her honest, upright husband, which has long ago caused all recollections of his early and unrequited affection for Louise Emory to fade almost entirely from his memory.

And when one evening he read from his paper to a fond wife, with his little daughter on his knee, the terrible scan-

dal connected with the unfortunate object of his early adoration, he inwardly thanked God. Leaning over, he reverently kissed the forehead of the pure little woman before him, who, in her unsuspecting innocence, scarcely comprehended or fully realized the dreadful import of these rumors, or knew what a world of misery and wretchedness had, and would continue to, come from this unfortunate affair.

McIntosh joined the small band of independent men, who, in both parties, had leagued themselves together in their State, for the purpose of breaking up the insolent power of monopoly and Conynghamism.

He had the proud satisfaction of inflicting an almost mortal blow upon Conyngham's now fast-waning power.

When the latter's legislature convened to elect a colleague for himself, and he endeavored to enforce on the people, as heretofore, a man selected in a little caucus of his own creatures, at his own private residence, under the leadership of McIntosh the people became thoroughly aroused, and rallying the independent and honest men of the party around them, to Conyngham's alarm, anger, and dismay they almost succeeded in giving a death-blow to Conynghamism forever.

But the latter, at the last moment, by a trick, was enabled to name his colleague, again defeating the wishes of the people.

Questor, with his usual sagacity, perceiving of late the fast-waning power of the Conynghams, and the disrepute into which the "Boss System" had fallen, like the prudent, calculating man he was, had determined to make hay while the sun shone; and ever since the last Presidential convention, at which such a death blow to bossism was given,

has been industriously engaged, under one pretext or another, in depleting the public treasury. Profiting, however, by the experience of the Tweed Ring, so skilfully has he succeeded in covering his tracks, that it is very doubtful whether the people will ever be able to uncover them. He still smokes incessantly, indulges in epigrammatic wisdom, and holds to the opinion that when he dies wisdom will die with him.

Hausenplose, after serving the purposes of the "ring" faithfully, received his just reward. Lured by the false lights of promised high offices, his treacherous friends amused themselves by gradually drawing him from the paths of ambition and honor, where he would have been in Malcolm Conyngham's way, through moral and political bogs and mires, until, utterly exhausted and almost hopeless, by constant disappointment from following the will-of-the-wisp which ever seemed to tantalizingly elude him when almost within his grasp, he cried "hold! enough!"

And with the assistance of his false friends, and the natural adaptability of the political crab, he has ever since been gradually retracing his official steps.

After leaving the gubernatorial chair he attempted the presidency, by the advice of the "ring," who desired to play his influence as a counter in their game to make Conyngham's man president.

Failing in this he accepted the postmastership of a large town, and after filling this office for some years, owing to the pressure of office-seekers under the spoils system, he was compelled to retire and make room for a more useful member of the "ring," and is now worthily officiating as justice of the peace in his native village of Speidelbergh.

Goforhim, the ring's candidate and Hamilton's successful competitor for Congressional honors, now flourished like a green bay tree.

Whipple's "Characteristics of Men," says, there are persons whose thoughts and feelings are all turned inwards, and group or huddle round some conceit of their intellect, or some master disposition of their selfishness. These are the men who gradually become insane on some one darling peculiarity of character, which is exaggerated into huge size by assiduous training. It is, as Sir Thomas Browne would say, "an acorn in their young brows which grows to an oak in their old heads." Conceit, for instance, he says, often ends in making a man mentally and morally deaf and blind. He hears nothing but the whispers of vanity, he sees nothing but what is reflected in the mirror of selfishness, though society may all the while be on the broad grin, or in a civil titter, at his pompous nothingness. He will doubt everything before he doubts his own importance; and his folly, being based on a solid foundation of self-delusion, steals out of him in the most unconscious and innocent way in the world.

And so Goforhim's egotism and speeches in Congress, consisting of elaborate compilings from the Congressional Record, and an incomprehensible and startling array of statistics, common-places, and figures, earned for him amongst his constituents the title of the "Lightning Calculator;" but in the superabundance of his enormous self-conceit, which completely blinded him mentally, he never for a moment doubted but that these speeches were not only monuments of wisdom, but would serve countless generations in their efforts to guide our country through the perils that may beset her path.

In printing his speeches the government printing office was frequently compelled to suspend work upon them until they received from the type foundry a new supply of "I's," which always gave out before completing them.

To still further add to his distress and the discomfort of his friends, his malady took another form, — too much contact with silver mining millionaires in Congress. He began to imagine himself not only the “savior of his country,” but also that he possessed, or was about to possess, the wealth of Aladdin.

To such an extent did he labor under this delusion, that his friends became seriously alarmed, and they finally induced him to take a trip amongst the Mormons and the silver mining regions, where they thought an indulgence in these harmless vagaries amongst congenial surroundings, and far from the original exciting causes, might possibly restore his lost equilibrium.

The following letter while showing some improvement, still warns his friends that it would not be wise or judicious to encourage a hasty return on his part. It is clipped from a Salt Lake paper, but is in reality, from his own pen.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS.

CONGRESSMEN GOFORHIM IN THE CITY.

Among the arrivals from the East, on Sunday evening, were Hon. Hilarious Galorious Goforhim, a prominent and active Republican worker, who represents one of Conyngham's districts in Congress, his home being in Armour. Mr. G — was one of the few congressmen who carried his district last fall on his own personal merits, and without resorting to the disreputable practices which have of late so disgraced our political contests. A gentleman to the manor born and bred, he scorned to obtain success by availing himself of the language and the tactics of the slums; and notwithstanding the vile personal detractions and calumnies which his opponent resorted to, and who exhausted the vocabulary of Billingsgate in order to smirch his pure and spotless character as a citizen and public man, preferring defeat to dishonor, he calmly referred his case to the people, and went in by a plurality vote of 700, exactly the majority his opponent, one Hamilton expected. The latter was a man in every

way unsuited to serve in the National councils, by reason of his intellectual inability and his inexperience in public affairs. Mr. Goforhim had charge of the Republican National Committee during the fight in Maine and Ohio, and his hard work in the interests of his party and his country in her hour of peril eventually broke down his health, which he now comes West to try and regain. He stopped over here to inquire about our institutions of which he claims to be a warm admirer; he considers Brigham Young one of the greatest men our country ever produced, excepting Washington. Our flourishing condition financially, and the redundancy of our other blessings, almost causes him to regret that the accident of birth prevents his warm adoption of our institutions and becoming a partaker of our many advantages and our financial prosperity. He leaves this morning for the Gass and Blow river countries where he has purchased half a dozen silver mines, and where he will spend the greater part of the summer looking into his mining interests.

Littlejohn has grown somewhat old, and is still in the service of the cormorant corporation which he has served so faithfully, and to the success of which, he is devoted, both body and soul. Like Ephraim, he is joined to his idols. Let him alone!

Mary Conyngham married a gentleman, in every respect the exact counterpart of Littlejohn. In addition to the qualities which distinguished that gentleman, he adds all the charms and accomplishments of the esthetical clergyman, — a new style of minister, lately beginning to make its appearance in religious life.

This esthetical clergyman parts his hair in the middle, peels oranges and bananas with lemon-colored kids, and having done "Europe," adheres to the strictly English custom of never appearing upon the street without an umbrella, rain or shine.

Her sister Eleanor married an independent, fearless man, belonging to the ancient *regime*, and the party of the people. This gentleman's native pride refused to bow the

knee to the house of Conyngham, while it brought down upon him the hatred of Conyngham *père* and Conyngham *fils*, and denies him the "thrift that follows fawning," yet it has its compensation in the fact, that he not only retains his independence and manhood, but also the respect of his fellow-men.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END.

LARRY HAMILTON ?

He who had striven so bravely and manfully to outlive and overcome the errors of early manhood, amidst the mistakes and buffetings of adverse fate ?

With the never-failing encouragement and cheer of his noble wife, and by almost superhuman efforts on his own part, and years of trials and bitter disappointments, had he succeeded in rowing himself back from the eddies of the dreadful maelstrom, echoes of whose awful roar for years filled him with vague terror and alarm ?

His disappointment in business, and the failure of all his desperate efforts to retrieve himself, only needed his humiliating defeat by Goforhim, to drive him to the verge of despair and almost to madness.

All his brilliant visions were shattered like glass. All his ambitious hopes were crushed. He had striven desperately, and lost his last stake.

His failure had been so palpable, crushing, and to his brooding, disappointed mind so irredeemable, as to crush out all hope for the future. He felt that all his energies had been squandered, and the bloom and the beauty of life shriveled up forever. Henceforth, he was to be pointed out by his fellow-men as a *failure*. This thought, to a proud, ambitious, sensitive nature like Hamilton's, in moments of despondency and despair, so wrought upon his

morbid imagination as to almost drive him to destruction, as it has driven more than one noble spirit to tear aside the awful veil which separates the real from the unreal — the known from the unknown.

He had endured the goading evils of envy, hatred, contumely, neglect, and disappointments enough to break any proud man's heart, and all to end in what? —

DEAD FAILURE? A stranded bark, midway in life, hopelessly wrecked! All around him were men, many of them undeserving, happy, busy, and he alone now purposeless, hopeless, joyless — his life *wasted*.

The future was aimless. This was misery — misery mighty enough to quell the stoutest heart.

And despair had seized Lawrence Hamilton. His sorrowing friends, and almost heart-broken wife, were compelled to stand by in helpless anxiety, and see him slowly return to the dissipated courses of former days. He vainly endeavored, amongst old boon companions and the thoughtless of mankind, to dull the edge of despair, and disappointment which, like a canker-worm, was slowly eating out all life, all hope.

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Again was the fine, old Ashton mansion brilliantly illuminated for a scene of gayety and joyous festivity.

Society in Armour had been on the *qui vive* for weeks. Mrs. Ashton, in honor of Senator Malcolm Conyngham and lady, had determined to give a magnificent, fancy dress party — a party which was to eclipse in splendor and elegance any affair of the kind which had ever taken place in the social annals of the place. Both ladies and gentlemen had, for days, been making elaborate preparations to outvie one another in the elegance and picturesqueness of their costume, while the former spared nei-

ther pains nor expense in getting up their most lavish and most elaborate toilets. Some of the gentlemen sent to the city for costumes.

Poor Fannie heard of the coming party with a sickening sense of dread, for its effect on her proud and dispirited husband. She knew how bitter and deadly would be the poisonous draught to his proud, sensitive nature, to meet his mortal enemy, and the one man to whom, more than any other, he owed his present mortifying, humiliating, and hopeless condition. And she prayed long and earnestly that the poisoned chalice might pass from him, and that he might in some way, be spared the humiliation of adding, by his presence, to the brilliancy and triumph of his haughty, insolent, and remorseless foe, whose mean, coarsely-fibred nature both knew would ask no greater pleasure than to drag at his chariot's wheels, in his triumphal progress, one who was every way his superior in everything that constitutes true nobility of character.

And these thoughts did not fail to make him fairly writhe and groan at the prospect of meeting this man face to face, treating him like a gentleman, and thus acknowledging his own humiliating position, which he owed to this man's heartlessness, greed, and selfish love of power.

Fannie, dreading the strain which a meeting under such circumstances would inflict on his now irritable, despondent, and morbid state of mind, endeavored to dissuade him from going.

But Hamilton's stern pride inexorably demanded that he should face his life-long enemy, in the height of his ill-gotten and corruptly-acquired triumph. Yes, he would meet him eye to eye, and face to face; and he had no fears but, though surrounded, as no doubt Conyngham would be,

by numerous obsequious flatterers, he could compel this successful creature of duplicity to acknowledge, by a wavering glance, his master in all that pertains to generosity of heart and true manliness.

He had determined to face the thing out, cost what it might. And the brave, little woman, with her customary cheerfulness, pluck, and courage, determined to face the inevitable with him, and endeavored, by all in her power, to make herself as charming and attractive as possible.

And on the eventful eve of the never-to-be-forgotten party, as Hamilton put the finishing touches to a splendid costume representing an Elizabethan courtier, his wife could not avoid an admiring exclamation of surprise and pleasure.

His silk hose and slashed velvet doublet set off his lithe, graceful figure to perfection ; and but for the tired, saddened look, which, in spite of the gay trappings, betrayed itself in the drooping lids, and deep, thoughtful gray eyes, he would have been a living representative of one of the gay, gallant, chivalrous, and intellectual courtiers, who had made famous the reign of England's virgin queen.

Fannie assumed the role of an Arcadian shepherdess, a dress which, on account of its simplicity and beauty, enhanced and added wonderfully to her charms.

As Hamilton stood in his parlor waiting for his wife, carelessly leaning against a column, partially concealed by heavy rich drapery, and which answered admirably for a background to his elegant dress, he was the picture of life, and the personification of gayety and pleasure, as far as external appearances went. No one would have suspected the bitterness and despair — the rankling sense of impotency — within. His fevered imagination pictured, in somber colors, the phantoms of departed hopes ; and as he

contrasted his gay exterior with the sad internal realities of life, he could perceive only a gloom which tended to increase the bitterness of despair within.

The night was dark, and a drizzling rain was falling, as husband and wife, well-wrapped, stepped into the waiting carriage to be driven to the last place in the world to which either would have chosen to go for the purpose of spending a pleasant evening.

As they entered the parlor, the sweet strains of the "Blue Danube," together with the splendid effect produced by the elegant dressing, made an imposing and enchanting picture. Hamilton and Fannie entered the same room where many years before he had first learned to love the beautiful woman now hanging on his arm so lovingly, and whose charming grace and beauty, even after the lapse of years, caused now a low hum of admiration from those around him.

For some time Hamilton seemed to forget his misery in the pleasant surroundings, and amidst his friends he enjoyed himself; and his lively sallies and witty comments on the costumes of their companions was the occasion of a great deal of mirth.

As Hamilton turned suddenly towards the door, his figure unconsciously stretched to its full height, his usually pleasant countenance darkened as his face assumed an imperious, haughty, and scornful, expression of withering contempt, as his eyes met those of Malcolm Conyngham, who, with his wife, had just entered the room, amidst the subdued silence which generally accompanies the arrival of distinguished guests.

The cool, insolent, self-possession, which years of uninterrupted success had given to Conyngham, at once deserted him, and quailing under Hamilton's piercing and

burning glances of scorn and contempt, he passed him without recognition to the other side of the room, where he was soon surrounded by a fawning crowd of admirers.

After receiving their congratulations, he recovered himself, to some extent, and, with a lady on each arm, a taunting, scornful glance, he passed Hamilton, who had been left standing with his wife almost deserted by the guests, who had hastened to pay homage to success.

Hamilton returned the glance with a scorn and contempt equal to his own. Strange as it may seem, men hate most those whom they have most injured, and Conyngham at that moment enjoyed to the full his mean triumph over his former friend, whom he had betrayed and ruined like other friends, when it furthered his own selfish interest to do so.

The evening flew by on golden wings, and when the clock struck one, only a few intimate friends of the hostess remained engaged in pleasantly discussing the incidents of the evening.

Hamilton, with several gentlemen friends, had remained up stairs smoking, and drinking more wine than prudent men would have approved of, and the boisterous merriment of the party had several times caused Fannie to feel very uncomfortable, as she sat with Mrs. Ashton and the other ladies awaiting the appearance of her husband. The windows were all open, and the night was warm and sultry, while without the stillness was broken only by the pattering of the rain-drops on the leaves and shrubbery.

Suddenly there was a rushing sound, immediately followed by an ominous crushing, horrible thud, causing every one to start in terror to their feet.

"What was that! O, What was that!" were the exclamations, immediately followed by a low, agonized moan.

Amidst cries of alarm and fright, and a hurrying of

feet overhead, several gentlemen rushed outside, followed by servants with lights.

Hastening into the yard, a horrible sight presented itself.

In the solemn midnight stillness and the drizzling rain, the dull rays of a lantern disclosed to their terror-stricken gaze, lying on the pavement, the handsome form of Larry Hamilton, with the blood-bespattered hose and the crushed, blood-stained face of their friend, whose ghastly, staring eyes were upturned towards the dark, gloomy, and un pitying vault above.

As one of the gentlemen quickly kneeled and raised the head of the dying man, a wild, unearthly shriek resounded on the midnight air, that curdled the very blood in the veins of the terror-stricken group, and with her white face set, her eyes opened wide and livid with terror and awful despair, beating the air aimlessly with her hands, the light fell on the ghastly face of Fannie Hamilton, as she came flying down the pathway.

The crowd instinctively made way for her. For one awful moment she stood transfixed with horror, her eyes wide open, fixed, and staring, then, with one loud shriek, she threw herself on the blood-stained body of her dying husband, and, but for almost imperceptible breathing, to all appearances dead.

Ralph arrived at this moment and endeavored vainly by name to recall the dying man to consciousness.

His voice was interrupted by the stifled sobs of the women and the terrible death-rattle which, by degrees, grew fainter and fainter, and then ceased.

A few shuddering gasps — one last, deep sigh — and the spirit of the unhappy Hamilton returned to its Maker.

As Ralph shudderingly closed the glassy eyes, the limp and almost lifeless form of the widow was tenderly carried

into the room, where, with her husband, a few hours before she had stood, so handsome and so full of life, and who now lay in that same room, cold and stark !

Dead in his youthful beauty. His blood shed perhaps by his own hands. Who knows whether Hamilton, feeling, perhaps, faint, and desiring fresh air, had stepped from the room where he had been pleasantly conversing with his friends — although it was afterwards remarked that he had been unusually quiet — and walking to the balcony, while leaning over the low railing he had lost his balance and had been precipitated to the pavement below ; or whether disappointed, exhausted in body and mind, and maddened with wine, that here in the wretchedness of that lonely midnight hour of despair he had thrown himself into eternity. No one will ever know.

His mother did not long survive the terrible shock of her son's death.

As the mournful procession slowly returned from the cemetery, one gentleman remarked to another, while pointing out Conyngham and Littlejohn, " I hold those two men directly responsible for the unfortunate career and untimely death of this young man. Talented, bright, and with good impulses, he could have gracefully filled any position in life, but by some strange irony of fate he fell into the hands of, and his career was more or less shaped and warped to its unfortunate termination by, these two, as cold, selfish, narrow, and tyrannical men as the monopoly and spoils system ever brought to the surface."

Such men as Conyngham and Littlejohn would never rise to power but for the hateful monopoly and the base spoils system, a system which began its reign in tyranny, political corruption, and debauchery.

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